

# Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 10

Entering the Immortal Estate

I Eat Tomatoes

(我吃西红柿)

## Story Description:

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the multiverse was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller...than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

# Chapter 1: Youngflame Clan

Just shortly after Ninelotus reached Serpentwing Lake, in the distant Crimson Dragon Mountains of Stillwater Commandery, a large group of people were gathered around the tall, large teleportation array.

All of them had powerful auras. Clearly, none of them were ordinary.

Northmont Fox was standing behind a tall, skinny man. He sent to him, “Father, who did you pull me over here to meet? You didn’t even permit me to ask about this while we were in Stillwater City; you insisted on bringing me to the Raindragon Guard branch before telling me.”

The tall, skinny man was dressed in a black uniform. He wore a crown on his forehead, and his eyes were sunken and deep. However, his pupils seemed to carry a cold light that would bring fear to many.

This man was Northmont Fox’s father...Northmont Yin!

The two most likely candidates to become the next Marquis of Stillwater were Northmont Blacktiger and Northmont Yin. They had completely different temperaments. Northmont Blacktiger was like an enormous, primordial beast who was born with a dominating aura; anyone who looked at him would feel terror. In acting, he was incomparably dominating as well, and so he had many followers.

As for Northmont Yin, he was a truly ambitious and ruthless figure who was particularly skilled at biding his time. Nobody could see through Yin’s thoughts; he was a mystery to all.

“If I told you in Stillwater City, given your temperament, you might have leaked this information, which would be disastrous.” Yin shook his head. “This matter is extremely important, and very few know of it. Look at Immortal Eastrock of the local Raindragon Guard branch; he’s waiting, just like us. Although he’s brought a group of subordinates, I imagine that only he himself knows exactly who it is that we are waiting for.”

Fox instantly felt an itchy feeling in his heart. Someone capable of making even Immortal Eastrock and Yin come in person to wait for him,

and to act so secretly as for Yin to not even tell Fox, his own son, who it was?

“Who is it?” Fox was extremely anxious to know.

“This person is Youngflame Nong, of the Youngflame lineage,” Yin sent mentally.

Fox’s face instantly changed. He revealed a look of shock and amazement as he yelped back mentally, “Young master Youngflame Nong? One of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital? Why has he come to Stillwater Commandery? This, this...how can this be?”

“Now do you understand why I didn’t tell you?” Northmont Yin cast his son a glance.

Northmont Fox hurriedly nodded. He understood. Of course he understood.

Although the Northmont clan of Stillwater held a marquidom and was incomparably ancient and large, if they were compared to the rest of the Grand Xia Dynasty...there were still powers that were even mightier than the Northmont clan. For example, the almighty imperial clan of the Grand Xia Dynasty, the Xiamang clan, or some of the most powerful clans that had helped the Xiamang clan unify the world.

The Youngflame clan was one of the faithful ministers that served the imperial clan of the Grand Xia Dynasty!

Supposedly, during the Fiendgod era, the Youngflame clan was a clan that was as old and as powerful as the Xiamang clan. In fact, their history stretched to the most ancient of eras of this major world.

In the end, the Youngflame clan had submitted to the Xiamang lineage! They had followed the Xiamang clan in conquering the world, and had been one of the most powerful clans under the Xiamang clan’s control. As for the the Northmont clan and the other clans, they had all slowly begun to join the Xiamang clan later on, and in terms of power, they were vastly inferior to the Youngflame clan.

And nowadays...

The Youngflame clan's leader had the revered title of the 'Godplume Duke', and the clan itself held three marquidoms! The three commanderies it ruled over were all extremely vast ones, far larger than Stillwater Commandery. After all, the 3600 commanderies of the Grand Xia Dynasty were all different in size; Stillwater Commandery could only be described as an ordinary one. Some extremely large commanderies were comparable in size to dozens of Stillwater Commanderies.

As for this Youngflame Nong who was about to arrive, he was one of the leaders of the younger generation of Youngflame nobles. Unless something went amiss, the next clan leader of the Youngflame clan, the 'Godplume Duke', would be this Youngflame Nong!

But of course, the Youngflame clan's next leader had not been 100% set in stone; the selectees would still be tested and tried. Generally, however, the trials would be easily passed. It could be said that Youngflame Nong's status in the Youngflame clan was comparable to Ji Ning's status, when he had been a child, in the West Prefecture City of the Ji clan!

Internally, it had all but been decided that he would be the next Godplume Duke.

He would be a powerful figure, capable of influencing the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. The arrival of someone like him...it now made perfect sense as to why Northmont Yin and Immortal Eastrock had come in person and been so secretive about it, not letting anyone else know what was happening.

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"Coming."

"He's coming."

Their eyes all lit up. The teleportation array once more began to glow, and then a group of people appeared within it.

The leader was dressed in azure robes. He seemed quite plainly dressed, but upon a close examination...one would discover that the threads of this azure robe were actually the draconic whiskers of the 'divine dragons of

the East Sea'. The man's face had a calm smile on it, but the welcomers could all sense the natural, noble aura emanating from him!

It was a true, noble aura which only someone like him, who an ancient clan like the Youngflame clan had trained to be their next leader, would possess!

Youngflame Nong's status was such that even in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty, he was called one of the 'Four Dukelings'. Even imperial scions of the Xiamang clan had to have enough status within their clan to be able to treat with them on an equal footing. There were some members of the clan who borrowed the Xiamang clan's prestige but had no real status within it; these people weren't even qualified to become friends with Youngflame Nong.

"Young master Youngflame," Northmont Yin laughed and saluted with clasped hands.

"Young master Youngflame." Immortal Eastrock also clasped his hands.

Youngflame Nong looked at the two of them, then nodded. "Northmont Yin, Eastrock. I saw the two of you last time at the imperial capital. So much time has passed, as though in the blink of an eye. I have to trouble the two of you on this trip of mine to Stillwater City; I truly am guilty for doing so."

"It is our honor to be able to assist you, young master Youngflame," Immortal Eastrock and Northmont Yin both spoke out together.

The two of them couldn't help but glance at the person slightly behind Youngflame Nong. There was a tall, skinny, narrow-eyed, middle-aged man standing there, his skin pitch-black. The aura this man was emanating caused even Northmont Yin and Immortal Eastrock to feel secretly astonished.

"Fiendgod."

"A Fiendgod."

Both of them quickly came to this realization.

However, for an ancient clan like the Youngflame clan, raising Fiendgods wasn't too difficult. After all, these ancient clans had been flourishing since shortly after the major world was created. They had long ago captured countless Fiendgods. Although Fiendgods were arrogant, in the face of certain death, many would still be willing to submit.

"Young master Youngflame." Immortal Eastrock pointed at the group of people behind him. "I've already given them their instructions. They are absolutely reliable. There are two peak Wanxiang Adepts and a hundred Zifu Disciples. Young master Youngflame, if there is anything you need, just give them their instructions. Oh, and both of the Wanxiang Adepts are two-clawed Raindragon Guards."

"Two-clawed Raindragon Guards?" Youngflame Nong nodded after hearing this. Someone capable of becoming a two-clawed Raindragon Guard had to at least be comparable to Primal Daoists; they could be considered useful. As for the hundred Zifu Disciples? They'd be nothing more than cannon fodder.

"Bu You pays his respects to you, young master Youngflame," a messy-haired youth said respectfully.

"Xue Hongyi pays his respects to you, young master Youngflame," a red-robed youth saluted respectfully.

Youngflame Nong nodded lightly. "I'll have to trouble the two of you this time."

"It is our honor to be able to toil in your service, young master Youngflame," Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You both responded with modesty.

Northmont Yin, on the other side, spoke out as well. "I've also arranged for ten Wanxiang Adepts and a hundred Zifu Disciples. They are all Deathsworn and completely loyal. Perhaps the ten Wanxiang Adepts are not comparable to Xue Hongyi and Bu You, but if they join forces... generally speaking, even Primal Daoists would have to give them a wide berth."

"Deathsworn?" Youngflame Nong's eyes instantly lit up and he revealed

a smile. Generally speaking, it was extremely hard to make an Immortal cultivator become a suicide soldier, a Deathsworn; generally speaking, one would first train a normal person into becoming a Deathsworn, and then teach them cultivation! However, given the mindset of a Deathsworn, it would be very hard for them to advance very far on the path of Immortal cultivation...and thus, for Northmont Yin to be able to deliver ten Wanxiang-level Deathsworn was a major gift.

After all, although Immortal Eastrock had arranged for Xue Hongyi and Bu You to assist, they were clearly there to assist him, not to be suicide soldiers.

“This is my son, Northmont Fox. He’s never met you, young master Youngflame, but he’s long heard of your great fame. This time, he repeatedly begged me to let him come and let him see you in person, young master Youngflame,” Northmont Yin said with a smile.

“My respects to you, young master Youngflame.” Northmont Fox was incomparably excited and he quickly spoke his respects.

Youngflame Nong nodded gently. “Northmont Fox. Mm. I’ll remember your name.”

A simple phrase, but it caused Fox to feel incomparably excited.

“This trip of mine to Stillwater Commandery is part of a small test the clan has arranged for me.” Youngflame Nong looked towards Immortal Eastrock and Northmont Yin. “Thus, it isn’t appropriate for me to cause too much of a stir here. With these helpers you two have given me, my chances of success are now increased. I can’t be too slack in addressing this trial; thus, I won’t stay here any longer. There’s no need for the rest of you to send me off.”

“Then we will wait to congratulate you on your triumphant return, young master Youngflame, and then celebrate with you.” Northmont Yin and Immortal Eastrock both watched as Youngflame Nong’s group departed.

Only Northmont Yin, Northmont Fox, and Immortal Eastrock were left by this teleportation array.

Of course, those old servants who were in charge of maintaining the teleport array were present as well. However, when they were chatting, Immortal Eastrock had naturally used elemental energy to block out all sound, and so the old servants had no idea who had arrived.

“Father, we gifted him with Deathsworn...he’s just going to leave like that?” Fox gave his father a glance.

Yin glanced back at his son. “Consider yourself lucky that he accepted them. He is currently in the middle of his trials and just so happens to need helpers, and so he’ll accept them. In the future, when he becomes the next Godplume Duke, he’ll become a person capable of easily impacting the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. By then, he’d view our gift with contempt. Gifting him with a group of Deathsworn now is worth more than sending a hundred groups or a thousand groups in the future!

Fox seemed to understand.

“Let’s go back,” Yin instructed.

An enormous, completely dark-red warship. It seemed ancient and plain, and it soared through the skies.

Within the warship, there were a total of six hundred Zifu Disciples and ten-plus Wanxiang Adepts. Youngflame Nong and the skinny, black-skinned man next to him both stood at the railing of the warship, staring at the vast world before them.

“Xue Hongyi, Bu You,” Youngflame Nong asked, “Who are some of the formidable figures in Stillwater Commandery? Aside from Primal Daoists and Immortals.”

“Aside from Immortals and Primal Daoists...” Xue Hongyi said, “In our Stillwater Commandery, the most powerful of the Wanxiang Adepts would definitely include the most powerful geniuses that are gathered at the Black-White College. Of course the Skysplitter Sword Sect, the Bluewood tribe, and the Dragonhunter clan also have their own elites. I am afraid that being able to convince these true core members of these forces to risk their lives would be quite hard.”



Youngflame Nong nodded lightly.

Xue Hongyi was one of the most talented younger members of Snowdragon Mountain. However, because Snowdragon Mountain, in the grand scheme of things, was a small sect, Xue Hongyi was willing to serve as a servant in front of noble carriage.

Those even more talented geniuses, however, wouldn't necessarily be able to do so.

"Oh?" The nearby Adept Bu You's eyes lit up. "It seems we've reached Swallow Mountain. There is a peerless genius in Swallow Mountain, one of the truly top-tier Wanxiang members of the Black-White College. He is Adept Darknorth, Ji Ning."

Hearing Ji Ning's name, Xue Hongyi frowned.

"Ji Ning?" Youngflame Nong revealed a look of curiosity as well.

## Chapter 2: Power Makes Major Powers!

“I’ve never heard of him. Bu You, you tell me; what is so special about this person?” Youngflame Nong asked with curiosity.

Xue Hongyi stood to one side. Although he wasn’t happy, he could only hide his resentment in his heart.

“This person is a genius of the art of the sword. When he first entered the Black-White College, he defeated several of his senior fellow disciples in Dao Debates. In the end, it was a reincarnated Immortal, the Rainbowflame Fairy Yu Wei who defeated him. And now, he has only grown even more formidable! Not too long ago, he even defeated one of the three Primal Daoists of Snowdragon Mountain, Daoist Snowplume!” Adept Bu You said.

“Snowdragon Mountain?” Youngflame Nong looked at the nearby Xue Hongyi. “Hongyi, you are of Snowdragon Mountain, yes? Did this happen?”

Xue Hongyi felt extremely stifled, but in the end, he said in a low voice, “It did.”

“What level is Daoist Snowplume at?” Youngflame Nong asked. He lived in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty; how could he possibly know about the Primal Daoists of a small sect in Stillwater, such as Snowdragon Mountain?

Xue Hongyi said in a low voice, “Peak Primal.”

“Hahaha...this Ji Ning is worth paying a visit to.” Youngflame Nong laughed and nodded. This trip was an important trial the clan had assigned him, and in fact, they wouldn’t even provide him with much support. The only person he brought out from the clan was the old servant, Xiangliu Fang, who had protected him since he was a child. As for any other subordinates, he had to have others ‘volunteer’ them to him.

This trial was actually quite a difficult one.

The old servant had to stay next to him and protect him, and so he still

needed formidable subordinates. To invite a Primal Daoist or an Immortal? Youngflame Nong didn't feel safe doing so, because some powerful Primal Daoists and Immortals, given their combat ability, could instantly kill him! He absolutely would not permit this sort of a threat to exist.

Thus, he would only ask Wanxiang Adepts. No matter how powerful a Wanxiang Adept was...their power was within the realm of what he could handle.

However, some extremely powerful Primal Daoists were outside of that realm.

It is impossible to tell how powerful a person is just by looking at them. Even if a Primal Daoist might be little-known, no one could know how many secret arts he might be actually hiding. It was best to invite Wanxiang Adepts! It was safer, and within his realm of control. However, the more powerful a Wanxiang Adept, the harder it would be to invite them to come.

"Young master Youngflame, this Ji Ning has trained for less than thirty years. I imagine he might be quite hard to invite," Xue Hongyi said hurriedly. "In addition, he's also very arrogant. He didn't even show my Snowdragon Mountain any face at all. If we just go and ask him, he might be discourteous..."

"Hahaha, he wouldn't give your Snowdragon Mountain face, so you think he won't give me face?" Youngflame Nong gave him a glance. "Hongyi, I can tell that there are some grudges between your clan and him. However, since you've come to assist me, then you don't need to think about those things for now."

Xue Hongyi had no choice but to lower his head and say, "Understood."

"Come, let's take a look at this Ji Ning." Youngflame Nong smiled, filled with anticipation.

Serpentwing Lake. Brightheart Island. Within a study.

Ning was currently writing calligraphy, one character at a time.

Autumn Leaf was by his side, accompanying him and grinding hink for him. Ninelotus stood to one side, watching.

“Whew.”

Ning put down his brush, revealing a hint of a smile. Writing calligraphy truly was a form of enjoyment for him, especially when he incorporated his insights into the sword into them. This sort of feeling was truly pleasurable.

“Autumn Leaf, take it and burn it,” Ning said.

“Yes, young master.” Autumn Leaf immediately began to roll up the scroll.

“Autumn Leaf,” Ninelotus said, “Take it and burn it in a nearby room. I have some things to discuss with Ji Ning.”

Autumn Leaf nodded, then obediently left. In the room, only Ji Ning and Ninelotus were left.

“What secrets do you wish to discuss, that you need to avoid Autumn Leaf?” Ning hung the brush in its holder, then glanced at Ninelotus.

Ninelotus looked at Ning. “Ji Ning, don’t you feel as though...you are a bit too friendly and intimate with Autumn Leaf?”

Ning was stunned.

“As I see it, there’s not much of a difference between the way you treat Autumn Leaf and the way you treat me.” Ninelotus looked at Ji Ning. “I’m your Dao-Companion. She’s just your maid.”

“Hahaha...” Ning began to laugh. “You are over-thinking things.”

“I’m not,” Ninelotus said quickly. “I’m not as jealous and small-minded as you are thinking. However, in the future, it is guaranteed that you will become more and more powerful, and your status will become higher and higher. More and more people will follow you as well. With so many subordinates...how are you going to properly manage them? With rules, that’s how. How can you go without rules? There must be a clear distinction between those with high status and those with low status.

Autumn Leaf is a maid? Then she's a maid! If you don't distinguish between those of high and low status, then everything will be a mess!"

Everything she had learned within the Dongyan clan caused Ninelotus to believe that one had to clearly distinguish between exalted and humble statuses.

Servants were servants!

Even if you doted on a particular servant, a servant still had to act the part of a servant!

"What are you trying to say?" Ning began to frown.

"I just want to tell you that in the future, as you grow increasingly powerful, the Ji clan will also slowly grow powerful. A major clan needs to look like and operate like a major clan. As the supreme power behind this major power...you need to be even more careful in distinguishing between the statuses of those by your side!" Ninelotus said. "And you? Enough about Autumn Leaf for now; you even converse with those ordinary servants? You chit-chat with them? Those are just ordinary mortal servants. Why pay them any attention at all?"

Ning suddenly snapped, "Enough!"

Ninelotus was stunned.

"Everyone has their own way of handling their affairs. As for Autumn Leaf, although she is a maid, in my heart, she's my older sister!" Ning looked at Ninelotus.

Ninelotus gritted her teeth.

The two had lived in different environments, and Ning, in his previous life, had come from Earth. Naturally, there would be major differences in the ways they viewed and handled things.

"In the future, people are going to laugh at you if you act this way!" Ninelotus said with a frown.

"Laugh at me? Who will laugh at me?" Ning looked at Ninelotus. "In fact, why should I even care about if others laugh at me? I'm me. When

my fame truly reaches the point of shaking the entire Grand Xia Dynasty, others will most likely revere every single word I say and thing I do. Ninelotus, can it be that you still haven't seen through these things? A True Immortal, even one of low and despicable moral character...in the end, the various tribes will all lower their heads to lap at his feet. If, however, he was nothing but an ordinary mortal, even if his every word and action was keeping in accord with the rules of your so-called 'major clans', in the end, he'll be nothing more than a joke."

"Expand your horizons to include the entire Three Realms!"

"Personal power is the most important fundament! Only when you have power, will you become a major power!" Ning stared at Ninelotus.

Ninelotus could sense the powerful determination and the wild ambition in Ning's eyes. She lowered her head.

"Alright. I won't speak of this anymore. In the future, you'll understand." Ninelotus turned her head, moving to walk outside. But right at this moment...

A powerful ripple spread out from far away.

"Eh?" Ning and Ninelotus both turned their heads, staring towards the distant skies. They could both sense the ripple. Although they had just had an argument, they still flew together towards the skies.

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In midair. Ning, Ninelotus, Northson, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver had all flown here.

"Who is it?" Ning saw the ancient, plain-looking warship hanging in the skies far away. Atop the warship, a flag was fluttering with two characters on it - 'Young' 'Flame'.

"Youngflame Nong!" Ninelotus was shocked.

"The Youngflame clan?" Adept Vastriver was similarly shocked.

As for Ning, Northson, and Yu Wei, they hadn't even heard of this clan before. Clearly, they were befuddled.

Adept Vastriver hurriedly sent to them, “Be careful, fellow disciples. This Youngflame clan ranks amongst the top ten powerful clans in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. Many of their clansmen are officials serving the Grand Xia Dynasty, and they are extremely influential in this major world. Within their clan, there are three Marquisates, and these three marquisdoms vastly outstrip Stillwater Commandery in size.

Ninelotus hurriedly sent as well, “The Youngflame clan’s territory, in terms of size, is nearly a hundred times that of Stillwater Commandery! Their roots are incredibly deep; supposedly, shortly after this major world was created, the Youngflame clan had already begun to grow and prosper. In the incomparably distant Fiendgod Era, the Youngflame clan was an incomparably mighty force.

Ning, Northson, and Yu Wei were stunned upon hearing this.

“That’s too badass...” Northson blinked.

“Three marquisdoms in a single tribe?” Ning had reviewed a map of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty; amongst them, there were indeed three marquisdoms that were marked with ‘Youngflame clan’. These three marquisdoms were spread out in different areas, but each of them were vast; they were all extremely large marquisdoms.

“Why has the warship of such a powerful clan appeared at my Serpentwing Lake?” Ning was completely puzzled.

At this moment, a long corridor suddenly opened up from within that ancient, plain warship. An azure-robed man emerged, followed by a swarthy, tall, slender-eyed middle-aged man. Behind them was Xue Hongyi, Bu You, and a group of Wanxiang Adepts and Zifu Disciples.

“Xue Hongyi?” Ning immediately recognized him. Xue Hongyi gave Ning a glance as well.

“Everyone, be careful,” Ninelotus hurriedly sent. “This azure-robed youth...he’s one of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty, ‘Youngflame Nong’. Youngflame Nong’s status is extraordinary; unless something unexpected happens, he’ll be the next leader of the Youngflame clan, the next Godplume Duke.”

Ning, Northson, Adept Vastriver, and Yu Wei were all secretly tonguetied. The next leader of the Youngflame clan? He was this incredible?

“Dongyan Yun greets you, young master Youngflame,” Ninelotus said with a smile.

“You know me?” Youngflame Nong said, surprised, “Dongyan Yun? Can it be that you are ‘Ninelotus’ of the Dongyan clan?”

“Precisely so.” Ninelotus nodded.

Youngflame Nong smiled and nodded. He had been carefully reared since young, and was quite familiar with some of the most important figures of the supreme powers of this the Grand Xia Dynasty’s world. Ninelotus was the next leader of the Dongyan clan ; naturally, he was familiar with her. Although he had learned of her long ago, after reflecting slightly, he remembered everything about her.

“Ninelotus, you are far more beautiful than the painting I saw. In the painting, you were far more youthful,” Youngflame Nong said with a laugh.

Ninelotus laughed, then said, “Let me make the introductions for you, young master Youngflame. This is my Dao-Companion, Ji Ning.”

“Dao-Companion?” Youngflame Nong was startled, and then he nodded. “A perfect pairing, to be sure.”

“This is my senior apprentice-sister, the Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei. She is also a reincarnated Immortal.” Ninelotus next pointed to the black-robed Yu Wei.

Youngflame Nong’s eyes immediately lit up. Ninelotus could be said to be an extremely beautiful and graceful woman, but the Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei, was even superior to her. She caused even the eyes of Youngflame Nong, who usually stayed in the imperial capital, to light up.

“This is my senior apprentice-brother, Adept Vastriver, also a reincarnated Immortal. And this is my junior apprentice-brother, Mu Northson,” Ninelotus said.



As soon as Ninelotus finished her words...

“Greetings to you, young master Youngflame,” Ning, Northson, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver said in unison.

Youngflame Nong nodded as well. He could tell that this group was an extraordinary one. Next to him, Adept Bu You secretly sent him a mental message. “Congratulations, young master Youngflame. The Rainbowflame Fairy and Adept Vastriver are amongst the most supreme geniuses of the Black-White College; they are easily comparable to Ji Ning.”

Youngflame Nong looked towards their group, then said with a smile, “Come to think of it, I actually do have something to ask you to help out with.”

Ning’s group exchanged glances.

“Young master Youngflame, please speak,” Ning said.

# Chapter 3: Witchriver Immortal Estate!

Youngflame Nong said, "This is a small test my clan has given me. They've charged me with investigating an ancient Immortal estate. As for whether or not I'm able to acquire the aid of others, the clan won't care! I won't lie to you; this Immortal estate belonged to a Celestial Immortal. Although he died countless years ago, his estate is filled with many dangers, and the Diremonsters who were trapped within have constantly propagated. I imagine that there are quite a few monsters living there now...and there are some unknown dangers as well. Thus, I need some helpers. If you are willing to help me, then I will remember this favor."

These words caused the faces of Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Ninelotus, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver to change.

The estate of a Celestial Immortal?

Although the vast world was covered with countless Immortal estates, those generally belonged to Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals. Estates of Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals might be quite alluring to ordinary Zifu Disciples, but they were much less intriguing to the likes of Ning's group; after all, Ning's group had constant access to many living Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals. For example, Ning's master was Immortal Diancai!

But a Celestial Immortal's estate? That was completely different!

"Everyone, what do you think?" Adept Vastriver sent.

Ninelotus sent, "Youngflame Nong is one of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital; given his status, if he says he will remember this favor, he definitely will. For the sake of this favor along...I feel that we can help him. Once he becomes the next Godplume Duke, if he is willing to help us out even slightly, we will benefit tremendously."

"Let's not rush into it. I feel that the servant next to him is extremely dangerous," Ning sent. His subconscious had begun to warn of him a tremendous threat long ago, and the threat came from that servant. "If he has such a formidable helper already, why does he need our help? Let's

not rush into it and ask a bit more.”

“Mm, makes sense,” Adept Vastriver concurred.

“I’ll follow you, senior apprentice-brother,” Northson said simply.

“Let’s wait and see first,” Yu Wei agreed.

Although Ninelotus was more inclined towards accepting, clearly, Ning’s influence was a bit stronger within this group. The main reason was because, when a group of geniuses were together, they would value ability the most. The most powerful of their group was Ji Ning, Yu Wei, and Vastriver.

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Youngflame Nong could tell from the looks on the faces of Ning and the rest that they hadn’t yet been convinced. He thus continued, “This Celestial Immortal was known as Immortal Witchriver! He was an aquatic Diremonster who gained insight into the Dao and became a Celestial Immortal. In the past, his fame was widespread. Afterwards, he fought with other Immortals of the Three Realms and perished. The key to his Immortal estate was acquired by my Youngflame clan. However, my clan was in no rush to investigate. That’s why I’m certain that after Immortal Witchriver died, nobody has entered.”

“In addition, this Immortal estate is the lair of a Celestial Immortal; it definitely has many precious items inside, such as spirit-herbs, precious magic treasures, spirit-pills, unique refining materials, and more. There might even be Immortal-ranked magic treasures within!”

By now, Yu Wei and Adept Vastriver’s eyes were shining. Ning and Northson couldn’t help but feel stirred as well. An Immortal-ranked magic treasure? Right...the vast majority of Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals didn’t have Immortal-ranked magic treasures, but Celestial Immortals definitely would, and not just one! It was very possible that they might leave one behind in their homes.

“My goal is to achieve mastery of this Immortal estate; as for the treasures within, so long as you can acquire them, they will be yours. I

definitely won't fight with you for them. Even if I truly want them, I'll give you a satisfactory offer for them and won't force you." Youngflame Nong looked towards Ning's group. "This is my promise, and the promise of the Youngflame clan."

Ning's group exchanged glances with each other while secretly sending mental messages.

"We can go take a look," Adept Vastriver sent. "Entering a Celestial Immortal's estate is a rare opportunity to begin with. It is just as young master Youngflame said...without the key to the estate, there's no way to enter at all. It's a rare opportunity for us to enter alongside him."

"He's the young master of the Youngflame clan...the Youngflame clan's promises are worth trusting," Yu Wei sent.

"I'll follow you, senior apprentice-brother." Northson's words were the same as before.

"Ji Ning?" Ninelotus looked towards Ji Ning.

Ning was intrigued as well now.

Youngflame Nong look at them, then added, "Based on what I know, although Immortal Witchriver was a Diremonster, he was a Diremonster Sword Immortal, and had an extremely high level of insight into the Dao of the Sword. I imagine that his sword technique must be recorded down within his home."

Ning's eyes lit up.

"It seems as though junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning has been moved," Adept Vastriver sent with a laugh. "Everyone, let's decide...should we go?"

"We can make the trip," Yu Wei said. "Although it will be dangerous...if the Youngflame clan is willing to allow their young master to go, the danger level shouldn't be too ridiculous."

"Go," Ninelotus sent.

Northson looked at Ning.

"Let's go take a look," Ning nodded.

“Fine, I’ll go as well.” Northson revealed a smile.

.....

Adept Vastriver was the oldest of the group, and so he was the one to speak out. “Young master Youngflame, the five of us are willing to accompany you to the Witchriver Immortal Estate.”

“Haha, excellent!” Youngflame Nong’s eyes were shining. He clapped his hands, then said happily, “With the help of the five of you, I will definitely succeed!”

“Everyone, if there are any preparations you need to make, make them quickly,” Youngflame Nong said hurriedly. “We need to head to the Witchriver Immortal Estate as soon as possible.”

“We’re all free,” Adept Vastriver said with a laugh. “I’m afraid that junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning might need to make some minor arrangements, however.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you go make your arrangements. We’ll wait for you here,” Northson laughed as well.

They were guests; naturally, they could leave at any time. Ning, however, had to make some arrangements for his clan.

“Everyone, please wait a few moments.” Ning immediately transformed into a streak of light, flying towards Brightheart Island.

Brightheart Island. Autumn Leaf, Little Qing, and the Whitewater Hound had been waiting here the entire time.

“What’s going on? Who is that person?” Little Qing asked.

Ning looked towards Autumn Leaf. “Autumn Leaf, the person who came on that warship is a young master of an ancient, powerful clan known as the Youngflame clan. He’s asked us to help him carry out some matters...I need to temporarily leave for a period of time. I’ll hand everything on Brightheart Island over to you to handle. As for the Ji clan, help me send word that I’ll return soon.”

“Alright.” Autumn Leaf nodded obediently. Whatever Ning wanted to do,

Autumn Leaf would quietly support.

“Let’s go, Little Qing, Uncle White,” Ning laughed.

“We’re off!” Little Qing instantly transformed into a streak of mist, then reformed and wrapped herself around Ning’s arm as a little snake. As for the Whitewater Hound, he just quietly padded along besides Ning.

In going out and adventuring, one would naturally bring one’s spirit-beasts along.

“I want to see how incredible this Celestial Immortal’s estate is.” Ning felt a bit eager. Suddenly, he had a thought; “It’s best to be cautious. I should bring that treasure along and carry it on me. Supposedly, there are some places where magic treasures cannot be taken out of storage-type magic treasures.” A black armband appeared around, then wrapped itself around Ning’s arm. His magic clothing, in the appearance of furs, quickly covered it, making it disappear.

This black armband was one of the two major unique items which Ning had acquired from the underwater estate.

Ning still felt quite confident of his chances in this trip to the Celestial Immortal’s estate. He had overcome the fourth level of the Wargod Hall and had reached the Wanxiang level as a Fiendgod Refiner...the two treasure selection chances he had gained, Ning had used to choose protective items, not Earth-ranked magic treasures!

This was what the giant yellow bear had said: “It’s best to be careful. In the past, Rampart died at the Wanxiang Adept level. The Wanxiang level...it’s neither high nor low; you aren’t a weakling, but you also aren’t a true power yet either. It’s the level with the highest chance of death. Although this protective item can only be used once, its power is extraordinary. You can view it as a second life for yourself.”

The third time Ning had chosen a treasure, the giant yellow bear had said something similar: “This unique protective is the most suited for you; in the past, Daoist Threelives felt a sudden moment of interest and personally fashioned it.”

Aside from the Nethercold Swords which Ning had chosen the first time, Ning had used his other chances to choose protective treasures!

It must be understood that the set of Nethercold Swords, in and of itself, was already an extremely valuable treasure. It vastly surpassed the protective treasure which Immortal Diancai had previously given Ning; that protective treasure, for the current Ning, was a bit lacking. The two protective treasures which Ning chose this time, however...were no lower in value than the Nethercold Swords. Given that they were assessed by the underwater estate as top-grade, they were naturally extraordinary.

“With these two protective treasures, I should have enough resources to deal with any sudden, unexpected dangers,” Ning mused to himself. “Time to go.”

Ning had a little azure serpent around his arm, and a Whitewater Hound by his side. He immediately flew into the air.

.....

“Ji Ning, you also have spirit-beasts?” Youngflame Nong, who was waiting for him on the warship, immediately laughed upon seeing the little azure snake on Ning’s arm. “I have one as well. Come on out, Crimsonfire.”

Instantly, a crimson-headed serpent reared its head, emerging from the skin on Nong’s arm. This crimson serpent had a single horn on its head, and its eyes were gold.

“A Redscale Salamander?” Ning and the others were all secretly shocked. Godbeasts had the blood of Fiendgods, but there were differences amongst Godbeasts; normal Godbeasts were capable of transforming at the Zifu level, such as the Whitewater Hound and the Azure Skysnake! However, according to legend, some truly powerful Godbeasts would only be able to transform into human form after becoming Celestial Immortals. Those Godbeasts were truly fearsome.

Redscale Salamanders were extremely famous; they had to at least reach the Primal level before being able to transform! They were far more exalted than Azure Skysnakes and Whitewater Hounds.

“Hisssss.” The Redscale Salamander gave the Azure Skysnake and the Whitewater Hound a glance, then buried its head once more into Nong’s skin.

“Hahaha, Crimsonfire still isn’t able to take human form, so he’s quite depressed.” Youngflame Nong sat at the highest, principal seat of the warship, with Ning and the others seated below him. “Come, come, come. Let’s drink together. After we enter the Witchriver Immortal Estate, we won’t be as relaxed as we are now.”

“A toast to you, young master Youngflame.”

Adept Vastriver, Ning, Northson, Yu Wei, and Ninelotus all raised their cups. As for Xue Hongyi and Bu You, who were seated at the very bottom, they also raised their cups.

“Hahaha...” Youngflame Nong’s laughter rang out. Clearly, he was in an exceedingly good mood. And why wouldn’t he be? Although Xue Hongyi and Bu You were both two-clawed Raindragon Guards, compared to Ji Ning, the most brilliant genius of the Black-White College, and compared to the two reincarnated Immortals, Yu Wei and Adept Vastriver, Bu You and Hongyi were on a lower level.

His casual detour to Swallow Mountain’s Serpentwing Lake had resulted in five more helpers, each of whom were extraordinary! Even the slightly weaker Mu Northson was a genius of the Dao of Constructs. Those who walked the Dao of Constructs were innately skilled at fighting those who were of a higher level. In turn, Ninelotus was the next leader of the Dongyan clan; how could she not be in possession of some powerful protective items?

.....

They drank and made merry with each other. After just two days, they arrived at the place where the Witchriver Immortal Estate was hidden.

“The Witchriver Immortal Estate is in the distant Skyrove Mountains.” Youngflame Nong, standing at the front of the ship, pointed towards a distant, towering mountain range. He seemed quite resplendent and valiant.



Ning and the others followed his gaze, filled with anticipation as well.

# Chapter 4: Seize It!

The Skyrove Mountains were vast and endless, covering an expanse of more than a hundred thousand kilometers.

“The Witchriver Immortal Estate is hidden within these mountains. Even if one was to rely on divine sense to search for it, it would take weeks.” Youngflame Nong had a hint of anticipation in his eyes.

“However, I have the key to the estate; so long as we draw close to it, I’ll be able to sense it. Everyone, make your preparations; after we enter the Immortal estate, things will truly grow dangerous.”

The nearby Immortal cultivators all nodded.

“We are finally going to go in.” Mu Northson’s eyes were shining.

“Right. The abode of a Celestial Immortal.” Ning felt quite eager as well.

“Ji Ning.” The nearby Ninelotus stealthily sent him a message.

Ning turned to look at Ninelotus, revealing a smile. He sent back, “Senior apprentice-sister, what’s this about? Why are you sending me a mental message?”

“After entering the Immortal estate, you need to reveal your prowess, and also actively move to be more friendly to young master Youngflame. To be able to meet him is a rare opportunity; if you let it slip, it’ll be hard to gain it again in the future,” Ninelotus instructed. “You wasted both of the past two days. After entering the Immortal estate, you can’t continue to be so remiss.”

Ning frowned. “Senior apprentice-sister!”

“Don’t be angry,” Ninelotus said. “I know your temper; you don’t like to flatter others, but I’m not asking you to do that. I’m just asking you to be a bit more friendly...Ji Ning, you should know that you are far more powerful than Xue Hongyi, but during the past two days on the warship, Xue Hongyi often engaged young master Youngflame in conversation, and he has a much closer relationship to him than you do, as of right now.

You always just stand there, not saying a thing...this is really..."

"Senior apprentice-sister, I..." Ning wanted to explain.

"Let me finish." Ninelotus looked at Ji Ning. "Relationship-building...the reason why it is called relationship-building is because you need to build up a relationship between the two of you, which is accomplished through interacting with each other. That's the only way you can build up a relationship with him. Don't think that just because you helped him out that you'll have much of a relationship; that's just a favor, nothing more."

"When a favor is used up, it's gone. But a relationship is long-lasting!"

"You are arrogant and aloof by nature; you don't like to flatter others. But young master Youngflame is even more arrogant than you! As a result, the two of you barely interact with each other. Let me ask you this; if you were young master Youngflame...how much of a relationship would you feel that you have with a person who won't even talk to you? Even if this person helped you, I imagine that you wouldn't care too much about him."

Ning was stunned. Ninelotus' words did indeed have merit to them.

"Human relationships can be divided into several categories; strangers, familiar faces, friends, close friends, and lifelong friends," Ninelotus said. "You've only said one or two things to each other; to be honest, you and young master Youngflame can't even be considered 'familiar faces'; you continue to be strangers to each other. As for Xue Hongyi, he often chats with young master Youngflame. Afterwards, he is going to risk his life for him. Perhaps they might end up becoming friends."

"After you enter the Immortal estate, perhaps you might end up rendering more merits.."

"But in young master Youngflame's heart, he'll feel closer to Xue Hongyi, not you. Right now, because young master Youngflame needs your help for this trial, he's fairly courteous to you. But after he completes it, and especially after he becomes the next Godplume Duke...I imagine that he wouldn't even be bothered to cast you a single glance. If you ask him to help out, if it's a small matter, he might nod and return

the favor, but if what you ask is too troublesome, he might not even receive you. Even an Immortal might find it hard to meet with the new Godplume Duke.” Ninelotus looked at Ning.

“Senior apprentice-sister, I admit that your words have merit,” Ning sent back. “Favors, once repaid, are gone. Relationships are indeed long-lasting.”

“However...you are you, and I am me.”

“I don’t like to go and intentionally try to befriend someone. Let everything happen naturally,” Ning sent. “If I can become friends with young master Youngflame, that will naturally be a good thing. But if we cannot be friends, that’s fine as well.”

“A fortuitous encounter! That’s what this is, and you have to seize it!” Ninelotus sent urgently, “How many major figures will you run into in your life? If you miss this chance, it’ll be gone.”

“In taking the Immortal path, one will have to rely on one’s self.” Ning shook his head.

“But if someone helps you out at a critical moment, you’ll be able to move farther on your Immortal path,” Ninelotus sent.

“Senior apprentice-sister, if I were to intentionally go and befriend or ingratiate myself to someone, it will only impact my Dao-heart...in the end, it would be a loss,” Ning said.

“You...” Ninelotus was furious.

“Everyone has their own Dao. Senior apprentice-sister, there’s no need for you to try and force things,” Ning said. “Senior apprentice-sister...I’ve never tried to force you to do anything. I hope you won’t try to force me to do anything either. This is the second time now!”

Ninelotus was stunned. Right. Not too long ago, the two of you had squabbled at Brightheart Island over the matter of differentiation of statuses. That was the very first squabble the two had ever had.

“I’m just trying to help you accomplish greater things in the future.”

Ninelotus' eyes were turning slightly red.

"Alright, alright." Ning took Ninelotus by the hand, smiling towards her.

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The nearby Yu Wei, noticing that Ji Ning and Ninelotus were holding hands, frowned very slightly. And then, she turned her head, staring towards the distant, vast mountains outside the ship.

"How is Ji Ning so lucky?" Xue Hongyi glanced from the corner of his eyes at the hand-holding Ji Ning and Ninelotus, then cursed to himself, "This trip of young master Youngflame to the Immortal estate clearly didn't have anything to do with Ji Ning, but now he's been invited to participate as well. In addition, he actually ended up becoming Dao-Companions with Dongyan Yun."

Xue Hongyi, at first, had no idea about Ninelotus' background. However, over the course of the past two days on the ship together, Youngflame Nong had chatted with Ninelotus, and from their conversations, Xue Hongyi had learned...that Ninelotus was actually the next leader of the Dongyan clan. Instantly, Xue Hongyi felt incomparably jealous!

"That brat from the Ji clan ended up reaching such a level..." Xue Hongyi couldn't help but feel envy in his heart.

When news had spread of Ning defeating Daoist Snowplume, Xue Hongyi could scarcely believe it. He couldn't believe that the little punk who he could've obliterated with ease a few years ago had become even more powerful than him.

And now, Ji Ning had also gotten to know Youngflame Nong, and had become Dao-Companions with Ninelotus...

"I really hope this Ji Ning will die in the Witchriver Immortal Estate!" Xue Hongyi mused secretly to himself.

The ship flew through the air above the Skyrove Mountains for the amount of time needed to boil a kettle of tea. Suddenly, the azure-robed Youngflame Nong's eyes lit up as he stared downwards. "The Immortal estate is directly below us. Everyone, follow me inside."

“We’ve found the Immortal estate?”

“Right below us?”

The experts, previously still chatting casually, all focused their attention below.

BOOM!

The warship shot downwards, quickly gliding past the mountain peaks and flying into an extremely deep gorge.

“Halt.”

The ancient warship came to a halt in the air before one of the cliff walls.

“Wait for me to unlock the Immortal estate first.” Youngflame Nong produced a golden talisman in his hand. He pointed it towards the distant cliff, then used his elemental ki to activate the talisman. Rumble...the golden talisman instantly emitted a hazy golden pillar of light which illuminated the stone wall. The surface of the stone wall immediately began to twist and change, soon revealing an enormous, rippling, watery surface.

“Go in.” Youngflame Nong revealed a look of delight.

Swoosh!

The warship flew directly in, passing through the watery, rippling surface, then disappearing within it. Immediately afterwards, the rippling surface disappeared as well. The stone wall remained a stone wall, with nothing special about it at all.

.....

Ning’s group, aboard the warship, flew through the watery surface, then saw the scene in front of them rapidly change.

“This is...?” Ji Ning and the others aboard the warship saw the area around them be filled with a connected range of mountains. The mountain peaks were dreary and cold, as though nothing could thrive on them. As for the ground, it was a lifeless desert.

The Skyrove Mountains was a living, thriving mountain range. But upon entering this Immortal estate...what they saw was this desolate desert and the mountains above it.

Boom!

Rumble!

Boom!

Rumble!

From far away, a series of loud, earthshaking sounds rang out. The sounds rang out from a distant mountain peak, the most towering of the mountains present. The top of the mountain was completely covered by white patches. These white objects were Diremonsters, dressed in snowy white armor, which were clustered together, forming the various white patches.

These snowy white armored Diremonsters all had enormous fish-like tails and human bodies; their faces were covered with scales.

“Eh?”

“There?”

The countless Diremonsters all turned their heads in unison towards Ji Ning’s group, because the ripple caused by the warship passing through the watery surface had been detected by them.

“Humans!”

“They are humans!”

The thousand-plus merfolk, who were in the midst of training, all called out in shock. How many years had it been? Ever since their ancestors had been trapped within here, unable to escape, they had bred countless generations of descendants. The entirety of this Immortal estate world was filled with monsters; there wasn’t even a single human present. In fact, the late Immortal Witchriver himself was born a monster!

“Eh?” The leader of the training Diremonsters, an alluring-looking female merfolk with a naked upper body, was stunned...but then, her

shrill voice bellowed out, “Humans! Humans have entered the Immortal estate! They definitely have the key to the estate...quick, quick, seize it from them, seize the key of the estate!”

“Seize it!”

“Seize it!”

“Follow me and kill them!” The female merfolk immediately manifested a set of golden armor over her.

As she charged towards the sky, the thousand snowy-white armored merfolk Diremonsters all followed from behind. The runes on the Dao-armors they were wearing all began to glow as well.

Rumble...these thousand Diremonsters suddenly formed into an enormously massive, sky-filling wave. This vast, endless wave rolled forward, smashing towards Youngflame Nong and his group, aboard the distant warship.

“Once we seize the key to the estate, we’ll be able to escape. Take it!” The female merfolk bellowed mentally, causing the other merfolk Diremonsters behind her to bellow with fury as well.

The mountain peak was only a few dozen kilometers away from Ning’s group. Precisely because of how close it was, these merfolk Diremonsters were able to immediately ascertain that they were humans! This was the very first time this unfathomably ancient Immortal estate had humans appear within it..

A few dozen kilometers...it only took a few breaths to traverse this!

Aboard the warship, Youngflame Nong, Ji Ning, Xue Hongyi, and the others were all stunned.

“Dao-soldiers!”

“Monstrous Dao-soldiers!” They were all shocked. They had all seen, from far away, that there were quite a few Wanxiang Diremonsters amongst the crowd of beasts, and that female merfolk leader was very possibly a Primal Diremonster! Even the weakest monster in the group



was at the Zifu level. And with all of them also being Dao-soldiers...

“These Dao-armors must have been left behind by Immortal Witchriver for building up an army of Dao-soldiers.” Ning and the others all realized that they were in for quite a bit of trouble now.

# Chapter 5: Unblockable

This Immortal estate was the home of Immortal Witchriver; naturally, he had set up layers of defenses. Although he himself had perished, some of the defenses he had left behind remained usable; for example, his Dao-soldiers!

Immortal Witchriver had used up countless treasures in order to cultivate a powerful army of Dao-soldiers. In their most powerful prime, they were capable of easily killing a Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal! However, the Immortal estate had suffered through countless years of decay. Those oldest monstrous Dao-soldiers had died long ago, leaving behind a large amount of Dao-soldier armors.

Prior to this, Ji Ning and the others had guessed that as Immortal Witchriver was a monster Immortal, it was only logical to expect that he had stationed some of his race within his Immortal estate. This Immortal estate world...although it wasn't as infinitely vast as the Grand Xia Empire, it still spanned tens of thousands of kilometers, and was comparable in size to Earth. Thus, the monsters had continuously propagated.

The monsters had left behind their training methods to their descendants, while the Immortal estate itself had incomparably dense, nourishing levels of elemental energy. It was only normal for more Diremonsters to be created.

An host of Diremonsters...and a host of monstrous Dao-soldiers...these were two completely different concepts! With precious Dao-armors equipped, their power would explode tenfold or even a hundredfold!

Clans like the Ji clan also had Dao-armor suitable for mortals to use.

Dao-armor usable by Xiantian lifeforms and Zifu Disciples, however, were much more rare. Generally speaking, schools on the level of Snowdragon Mountain would have them.

As for Dao-armor which Wanxiang Adepts and Primal Daoists could use? Even sects like the Skysplitter Sword Sect would have to use all their

ability and spend enormous amounts of precious resources to procure such Dao-armors.

And so, right now...Ji Ning's group was in serious trouble!

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"Rumble...." A thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers swept forward, having transformed into a vast wave.

"Block them!"

Youngflame Nong, aboard the warship, let out a furious roar. Faced with a thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers, even he had an ugly look on his face now. A watery, rippling layer of black light appeared on the surface of the warship, completely protecting it.

BOOM!!!!

The edges of that vast, surging wave slashed against the warship like blades, causing the entire warship to be flipped over and sent flying backwards, smashing viciously against a nearby mountain peak. The entire mountain rang out from the sound of the collision, while the warship itself plunged deep into it. The black, watery curtain of protective light had completely dispersed.

"Uncle Fang, what should we do?" Youngflame Nong sent mentally.

"Young master, the combined, full-strength attack from those thousand Dao-soldiers was comparable to a Loose Immortal's might." The black, middle-aged man next to Youngflame Nong sent mentally, "That merwoman leader...she is definitely a Primal Diremonsters. My priority is definitely going to be staying close to you and protecting you. After all, I'm only skilled at close combat; if I were to charge out, then I would no longer be able to protect you. Let the others go face them. I'll wait for a good opportunity; once I seize it and kill that leading Primal merwoman... then the other Dao-soldiers will be much less of a threat."

"Kill!"

"Everyone, it's up to you." Youngflame Nong sent a mental message to

Ning, Xue Hongyi, Adept Vastriver, and the others.

Ning's group were all secretly cursing; clearly, this Youngflame Nong wouldn't willingly risk himself. He was having them face the danger.

"Kill!" Xue Hongyi was the first to attack. With a sweep of his hand, he transformed into a streak of snowy white large, charging towards the thousand invading Dao-soldiers.

"Sword formation!" More than seven hundred flying swords appeared around Ji Ning. His peak Wanxiang-level elemental ki, using the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], formed a sword of light before him. This sword of light immediately executed the fifth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] - Moonlight Hiding the Sword. Instantly, a seemingly soft, gentle beam of moonlight seemed to caress the wave of monstrous Dao-soldiers.

"Seal!" Yu Wei pointed into the distance. Whoosh! An enormous ice phoenix appeared in midair. This giant phoenix, completely formed from frozen ice, spread its wings and flew forward, carrying a heart-shaking, majestic aura.

"Vastwave Breaker!" Adept Vastriver let out a loud cry, but maintained his elegant and graceful poise. An enormous black sword appeared in midair, covered with runes. This giant black sword slashed through the skies, chopping towards the Dao-soldiers.

.....

Ning's group, including the Zifu Disciples and the Wanxiang-level Deathsworn, all released powerful techniques. Ning and the others on his level were all capable of giving that female Primal Diremonster a good fight! However, she was linked to the thousand Dao-soldiers, and thus was now able to unleash astonishing levels of power, vastly surpassing any single person in Ning's group.

Rumble....

With an enormous rumbling sound, their sword-light and magic techniques either crumbled, vanished, or were knocked flying back.

The Zifu Disciples all formed into formations, preparing to resist together.

“We have to move fast. Fast, fast, fast! We need to take that key as soon as possible; if we are too slow, then the key will be taken by those old bastards,” the leading merwoman Diremonster sent mentally. “Children, annihilate these humans.”

“Kill.”

“Kill.”

The thousand-plus Dao-soldiers, when joining forces, were capable of unleashing power which no one in Ning’s group was capable of resisting.

That enormous wave once more smashed directly towards them. Ning’s group was quickly forced to retreat, but the weaker Zifu Disciples began to perish. Although they had formed formations...their formations, in the face of the formation of monstrous Dao-soldiers, simply wasn’t able to hold on at all.

Crunch.

Some of the human Zifu Disciples spat up mouthfuls of blood. Some of their bodies crumbled. One after another, they died.

Fortunately, Ning and the others were working to block as well. Otherwise, most likely, in a single breath’s worth of time, all of the Zifu Disciples would have perished.

“Too vicious,” Northson sent mentally. “Senior apprentice-brother, that Youngflame Nong definitely has many treasures on him, but he’s not even willing to use a single one of them. He just watched as those Zifu Disciples perished.”

“We just entered the Immortal estate moments ago. It’s only natural that he wouldn’t be willing to use his treasures right away,” Ning responded.

Ji Ning, Yu Wei, Ninelotus, and the others all had their own life-saving techniques. But nobody would choose to use them this early. After all...

they had only just entered the Immortal estate.

.....

Youngflame Nong stood there watching, with the swarthy, black-skinned man standing by his side, protecting him. The black-skinned, middle-aged man just watched quietly. His facial expressions didn't change at all when their Zifu Disciples started to die; his gaze was firmly focused on the distant, ferocious wave of elemental power, formed by the monstrous Dao-soldiers. The way in which the elemental ki circulated through their formation was extremely subtle and profound.

Right at this moment...

The black-skinned man, still by Youngflame Nong, suddenly revealed a cold light in his eyes. A pair of sharp awls appeared in his right and left hands. He took a sudden step forward, and his left arm began to elongate. In fact, one long serpent after another began to appear and coil around his arm. His left arm struck out with massive, savage power, sending the awl flying towards the front!

Whoosh!

The long black awl instantly pierced through the skies, leaving behind a brilliant, eye-catching scar in the sky as it pierced directly towards the giant wave formed from monstrous Dao-soldiers.

BOOM!!!

An explosive sound. The massive, ferocious wave actually was blown apart! The giant wave vanished, revealing that more than ten of the Diremonster Dao-soldiers had been completely blasted into chunks of meat. The other monstrous Dao-soldiers were all completely stunned, and they all stared at the black, middle-aged man who had thrown out the long awl.

“What?! He actually discovered the core of our Dao-soldier formation, then shattered it and destroyed the formation?” The merwoman Diremonster was shocked. If the attack hadn't struck the core, it would've passed through the massive wave, not cause it to completely collapse.

The merwoman Diremonster turned her head, staring at the black, middle-aged man who had thrown out the awl. But...

Whoosh!

The long awl in the middle-aged man's right hand suddenly flashed out as well; his right arm also became covered with long, coiling serpents, and it became incomparably strong and muscular, emanating a terrifying, heart-shaking aura. Once more, that dazzling, eye-catchingly brilliant scar in the skies appeared...as the awl pierced directly through the body of the merwoman Diremonster, who had wanted to dodge, but was completely unable to!

"This, this..." A look of shock and despair appeared on her face. "How can he be so powerful? I was completely unable to dodge. He, he...he's a human Immortal?" And then, her consciousness faded away. She fell down from the skies, her body pierced through. She was dead!

"The Queen is dead!"

"The Queen died! Quick, flee, flee!"

"Quick, flee!"

Seeing that their leader had been so easily killed, the other merfolk Diremonsters no longer had any appetite for battle. All of them began to flee.

"Swish!"

"Whoosh!"

"Bang!"

Ji Ning, Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, and the others naturally wouldn't show mercy at a time like this. It be must understood that these monsters were all wearing Dao-armor, most of which was meant for Zifu Disciples, and some of which were even usable by Wanxiang Adepts. A single set of Dao-armor usable by Wanxiang Diremonsters was far more valuable than an ordinary Earth-ranked magic treasure.

"Two sets. Three sets." Northson didn't hold back at all, killing one after

another and seizing as many as he could.

Moments later.

The remaining monstrous Dao-soldiers had all fled far away, leaving behind a pile of corpses and a heap of Dao-armors in the hands of Ning's group.

"We killed more than two hundred monsters, while more than a hundred of our Zifu Disciples died." Youngflame Nong didn't reveal a look of happiness on his face at all. Although he knew all along that there would be some danger in this trial, he hadn't expected that his team would've suffered such a thwack as soon as they entered.

"Young master Youngflame." The black-skinned, middle-aged man retrieved his awls, then said in a low voice, "Let's hurry and leave. Perhaps even more powerful Diremonsters will come over soon."

"Right." Youngflame Nong nodded. "Let's go." He looked towards Ning and the others.

Right at this moment...

A deep, powerful surge of divine sense instantly encapsulated this region.

"Humans, now that you have entered the Immortal estate...are you still dreaming of leaving alive?" A deep, sonorous voice rang out.

"What a powerful divine sense." As soon as Ning's own divine sense collided against this person's, he could sense how powerful it was. Although he viewed his divine sense as his strongest attribute, he could tell that this person vastly surpassed him.

"Senior apprentice-brother, look." Northson stared, wide-eyed, towards the distance.

"This...is big trouble." Adept Vastriver was staring towards the distance as well.

Ning turned to looked as well.

There, in the distant skies, an enormous, massive wave of water was



soaring this way, like a titanic flood that covered the heavens themselves. The size of this massive wave was more than ten times greater than the previous one...and the aura emanating from this massive wave was vastly more powerful than the wave created by the merfolk.

“More than ten thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers!” The black-skinned, awl-wielding man by Youngflame Nong’s side growled out in a low voice.

The hearts of everyone in Ning’s group sank. More than thousand? This was comparable to the entire Snowdragon Mountain sect. The worst thing was, each and every one of these ten thousand Diremonsters were Dao-soldiers! There was no way a school like Snowdragon Mountain could possibly acquire so many Dao-armors, especially the ones which even Primal Diremonsters could use. This level of power...it was enough to cause even an Immortal to feel fear.

“Young master, I won’t be able to block them,” the black-skinned man sent.

# Chapter 6: Fiendgod, Hydraga

“Young master Youngflame, there’s no way we can deal with so many monstrous Dao-soldiers,” Adept Vastriver sent hurriedly.

Ning, staring at the titanic, sky-filling wave that had been formed by countless monstrous Dao-soldiers, felt powerless as well. He sent, “Young master Youngflame, what now?”

“Young master Youngflame.”

“Young master Youngflame.”

All of them looked towards Youngflame Nong. Even the black-skinned man, Xiangliu Fang, looked towards his young master.

“Uncle Fang, don’t worry about me. Go all out and massacre them.” Youngflame Nong ground his teeth. Waving his hand, he produced a marvelous golden globe of light which flew into the air, quickly growing in size until it reached a diameter of thirty meters.

“All of you, get in,” Youngflame Nong ordered. At the same time, he produced a white sack in his other hand, which opened up. “Don’t resist.”

Whooooooooosh.

The surrounding Zifu Disciples were all sucked into the sack, and then the sack itself was carried by Youngflame Nong as he stepped into the golden globe of light.

Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Ninelotus, Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, Xue Hongyi, Adept Bu You, and the other Wanxiang adepts all flew into the golden globe of light as well.

“Uncle Fang, I’ll leave this in your hands. Let’s reunite later,” Youngflame Nong said.

“Alright. It’s been quite a while since I’ve truly gone all out in a fight.” A hint of excitement had appeared in Xiangliu Fang’s eyes. Even he found it quite taxing to help protect Youngflame Nong from so many combined Dao-soldier attacks, as he had to block them all. Now that he no longer

needed to do so, he was suddenly much more free to utilize his speed and agility, fighting to his heart's content.

“Let’s go.” With but a thought, Youngflame Nong instantly caused the golden globe of light to begin flying at high speed. With a swoosh, it quickly flew towards the distance.

Ning and the others within the golden globe of light, curious, reached out to touch the light. Previously, they had been able to easily pass through it, but now, they realized that this golden globe of light felt extremely tough and resilient.

“This is my ‘Goldspirit Halo’,” Youngflame Nong said confidently. “Once I’ve activated the divine light within it, we are no longer able to exit it, but outside attacks are similarly unable to reach us...forget about these Dao-soldiers, even if three or five Loose Immortals came and attacked, they wouldn’t be able to do anything to us until after the energy of the divine light is used up.”

Ning secretly sighed in amazement. Unless something unexpected occurred, Youngflame Nong would be the next Godplume Duke...and he really lived up to that reputation. A casual treasure he pulled out was already comparable to the two life-saving items which Ning had acquired from the underwater estate.

Of the two life-saving items Ning had acquired in the underwater estate, one was offensive while the other was defensive. The defensive one, he had acquired from the Treasure Pavilion when he had reached the Wanxiang level as a Fiendgod. The offensive one, he had acquired after passing the fourth level of the Wargod Hall. This offensive treasure had been personally forged by Daoist Threelives in a moment of amusement, and its power was extraordinary.

“Five Skypillars!”

“Look! Five Skypillars!”

The Goldspirit Halo had just flown a few hundred kilometers away, high into the skies. As the saying went, when standing at a high vantage point, one would be able to see to a greater distance. This Immortal estate was

tens of thousands of kilometers in size. Now that they were in the skies, they could immediately see that at the ends of the world in each direction, there was a pillar of golden light, soaring through the clouds and into the heavens. There were five in total, and each was unfathomably tall.

These five golden Skypillars of light seemed to be holding up the entire Immortal estate world.

“Five directions...the Five Elements,” Ning murmured to himself. “It seems this Immortal estate is divided up into five branching halls, each of which help to stabilize this world.”

“Skypillars.” Adept Vastriver and the others all revealed looks of delight.

“Hahaha...” Youngflame Nong began to laugh loudly. “So this Witchriver Immortal Estate is divided up into five halls. Those five distant Skypillars represent the locations of the five halls. Let’s immediately go over there. I have the key to the estate, and we can enter the halls. Those monstrous Dao-soldiers, however, cannot. Let’s go!”

Swoosh!

The golden globe of light quickly flew towards one of the closest Skypillars.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The thundering roars of battle seemed to shake the world. That vast, heaven-covering wave came crashing towards them, but in front of that Goldspirit Halo, a single, seemingly ordinary figure stood there protectively. It was that servant...Xiangliu Fang.

“Young master, the rest of you can head over. I’ll be there soon,” Xiangliu Fang said.

Within the Goldspirit Halo, Ji Ning and the others were naturally staring towards the distant figure of Xiangliu Fang, as well as that heaven-covering wave.

And then...

Xiangliu Fang's body suddenly increased explosively in size. An unearthly, savage aura blasted out from him, and his figure quickly transformed into an incomparably massive, terrifying, and towering shape that was more than three thousand meters tall. His lower body was that of an enormous serpent, while his upper body appeared to be human. From his head, however, eight additional, massive serpentine heads emerged as well.

Nine heads, and the body of a serpent. An ancient, primal, savage aura emanated from him, filling the skies.

"Fiendgod!" Ning held his breath.

"A Fiendgod."

"Good heavens...a Fiendgod."

All of them were completely overwhelmed. They could all tell that this was definitely a Fiendgod! Someone with a strange appearance like this, with nine heads and the body of a serpent, clearly was not a human...and yet, he didn't have the slightest hint of a monstrous aura either. What he emanated was the aura of a primordial Fiendgod, which caused all of their hearts to quiver. Given his massive body and ancient aura...he could only be a Fiendgod.

The likes of Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You had never before seen a true Fiendgod.

"What an enormous body...is that a divine ability, or is his body naturally that large?" Adept Bu You couldn't help but ask.

"Fiendgods are born with massive bodies," Youngflame Nong said confidently. "Uncle Fang belongs to the primordial Fiendgod race known as the Xiangliu, the Hydra. Hydra, even amongst Fiendgods, are extremely powerful. Even without using any divine abilities, they have Fiendgod bodies that are three thousand meters long. Although Uncle Fang is only at the Primal level, as a true Fiendgod, and a Hydra at that, even many Loose Immortals are no match for him."

Ning and the others were all completely stunned. Although previously,

Ning had seen an ancient Fiendgod attack during in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains, and that ancient, awakened Fiendgod was clearly even more powerful than Xiangliu Fang...that ancient Fiendgod had simply crushed the Dragonwhale King's with his fingers. Ning hadn't had a chance to watch him truly fight.

But this time...he finally had a chance to see a true Fiendgod fight.

Fiendgod Body Refining...the goal was for humans to approach Fiendgods in terms of body strength! However, compared to a true Fiendgod, there was still a huge difference; for example, one's body wouldn't be as large as a Fiendgod's, and one's innate talents wouldn't be as strong as a Fiendgod's...

.....

"A Fiendgod?" The monstrous Dao-soldiers that were attacking were all badly startled as well. They had been living in this Immortal estate the entire time; they had heard of Fiendgods, but this was their first time actually seeing one.

The enormous, nine-headed, serpent-bodied Fiendgod towered there in the skies, two enormous black awls appearing within his hands.

"KILL!" Xiangliu Fang bellowed loudly.

BOOM!

Xiangliu Fang's enormous serpentine tail swept out, and the air itself seemed to explode. Xiangliu Fang threw himself directly towards the giant group of monstrous Dao-soldiers.

"Just a single Fiendgod, and one that hasn't even reached the Void level. No need to fear him." That massive, sonorous voice echoed out once more, ringing in the ears of each of the monstrous Dao-soldiers. "Crush this Fiendgod to death."

"Haaaaaargh!"

"Haaaaaargh!"

"Haaaaaargh!"

Xiangliu Fnag's eight serpentine heads simultaneously unleashed savage roars. Suddenly, the temperature in the surrounding area dropped precipitously, to the point where ice and frost began to form. Instantly, a world of frost and snow manifested. In addition, his roars also struck out against their souls. However, since the monstrous Dao-soldiers were joined together as one, their souls were joined together as well.

"Kill!" The massive tidal wave crushed forward.

BOOM! BOOM!

The three-thousand meter Fiendgod moved straight forward to receive the attack, and the long awls in his hands stabbed out viciously towards the massive wave, causing the air to expode and seeming to carry enough power to shatter the skies and rend the earth.

Xiang Liufang's massive serpentine tail oscillated repeatedly, causing him to be incomparably agile and crafty, allowing him to time and time again avoid the sharp 'tip' of the massive wave, and then give the massive wave a vicious counter-stab!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

There, in the skies, the Fiendgod and the massive wave collided against each other repeatedly. A true Fiendgod absolutely had the power to fight those at a higher level of power. A Primal Fiendgod...this was something that was generally comparable to a powerful Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal. As for a Void-level Fiendgod? They were all comparable to Celestial Immortals! By comparison, Void-level human Earth Immortals, even those who trained as Fiendgods, however, were vastly inferior to Celestial Immortals. From this, one could tell how unique Fiendgods were.

However, there were simply far too many of the monstrous Dao-soldiers. Even Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals would have to stay away from them. Thus, the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, was still the weaker party in this engagement. However, given his massive, Fiendgod body, he wasn't afraid of suffering wounds. He was also incomparably nimble, and was thus able to unleash one terrifying attack after another in response.

“Uncle Fang can both advance or retreat in this battle, and he’s extremely nimble. He’s also able to keep fighting for a very long time... although these monstrous Dao-soldiers are capable of unleashing a shocking amount of power, there is a limit to their elemental ki; they won’t be able to hold on for too long,” Youngflame Nong said confidently.

“Formidable.” Adept Vastriver couldn’t help but sigh in amazement. “A true Fiendgod...they truly are formidable. Fiendgod Body Refiners...no matter how hard they strive to approach Fiendgods in power, a gulf still remains.”

“Right.” Ning nodded as well.

“The Youngflame clan truly is one of the top ten ancient clans of the Grand Xia Empire. A single young master’s personal servant...is actually an ancient, Primal-level Fiendgod.” Ning secretly sighed in amazement as well.

“How long will it be before my Dongyan clan is this powerful as well?” Ninelotus murmured silently to herself. Although the Dongyan clan also had Fiendgods, they wouldn’t go so far as to let one of their Primal-level Fiendgods serve as personal bodyguards.

Yu Wei just watched all of this quietly. As she looked at the Hydraga, some images from her past life began to flit through her mind.

“Hydraga...” Yu Wei let out a soft sigh.

.....

As Ning’s group was fleeing towards the Skypillar while watching the battle, suddenly...

“Old Poison-Dragon, hahaha...this Fiendgod is clearly only at the Primal level, but you still aren’t able to do anything to him? You, a Loose Immortal? Hahaha, it seems as though in the end, it will still be left to our Witchriver clan.” Accompanied by a laugh that seemed to cause the world to tremble, off in the distance, an enormous, ugly, hunchbacked giant suddenly appeared. The hunchbacked giant was tens of thousands of meters tall, and wielded a massive metal pitchfork. This giant appeared



rather blurry and indistinct; clearly, it was formed from a large number of monstrous Dao-soldiers.

“Yaksha Dao-soldiers? Immortal Witchriver actually had Yaksha Dao-soldiers under his command?” Youngflame Nong was shocked. “The Witchriver clan...can these be the descendants of Immortal Witchriver?”

Immortal Witchriver was originally a monster himself. Naturally, he treated his own clansmen with more favor. Although countless years had passed, the clansmen of Immortal Witchriver remained the most powerful monstrous force within this Immortal estate world.

“Uncle Fang, quick, retreat.” Youngflame Nong didn’t dare to hesitate, staring with panic towards the distant Skypillar.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! The Goldspirit Halo continued to move closer and closer towards it.

“I can sense it.” Youngflame Nong revealed a look of delight as he stared towards the massive yet blurry illusion of a Skypillar, then loudly shouted, “OPEN!”

Instantly, an enormous entrance appeared into the illusory Skypillar. The entrance was open, and upon seeing it, Ning and the others all revealed looks of delight, knowing that this was one of the true, important locations of the Witchriver Immortal Estate.

Swoosh.

The Goldspirit Halo flew directly inside, and then the illusory entrance once more vanished.

# Chapter 7: The Vault of Treasures

This was an enormous palace, but it was completely quiet and soundless. The stillness here had remained unbroken for countless, countless years.

Once Youngflame Nong, Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Xue Hongyi, and the others flew into the palace from within the Goldspirit Halo, all of them let out sighs of relief. They had finally managed to escape and make it inside.

“We finally made it in. That Immortal estate world is simply too terrifying. One group of monstrous Dao-soldiers after another...one feels terrified just looking at them.” Although Ning was no coward, he had felt completely powerless earlier, because the difference in power was simply too great. He would have been completely unable to fight back.

“Senior apprentice-brother.” Northson looked at Ning.

“Hm?” Ning looked back towards him.

“Do you think...we shouldn’t have come here?” Northson muttered, “Earlier, the very first group of merfolk Dao-soldiers we fought against numbered over a thousand. They were able to effortlessly crush us. And then, afterwards, an even more powerful army of more than ten thousand Dao-soldiers appeared...and then the so-called Yaksha Dao-soldier appeared, formed from the monsters of the Witchriver clan. Even that Fiendgod Hydraga was unable to stop them. I feel as though...we are completely useless here.”

Northson was muttering, not sending a mental message. Thus, everyone around him could hear his words. All of them were silent.

It was true. Just now, they had relied on Youngflame Nong’s servant, the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, to do everything. It was the Fiendgod who had killed the leader of the merfolk Dao-soldiers, and it was also the Fiendgod who had gone to block the ten-thousand plus Dao-soldier wave. Ning and the others had only been able to watch.

“Everyone,” Youngflame Nong laughed, “Don’t feel dispirited. There was no way that we could’ve predicted in advance that this Immortal estate would actually give birth to so many powerful monsters, all of whom possessed Dao-armors. No matter what, however, in the end, we’ve managed to make it inside one of the palaces of the Witchriver Immortal Estate.”

“Only one who has the key to the estate can make it inside; thus, after Immortal Witchriver died, despite the passage of countless years, no other living creatures have ever made it inside this palace. This is an extremely safe place. But of course...some of the safeguards Immortal Witchriver had originally set up might still be functioning. Thus, let’s not rush about rashly. Wait for me to welcome Uncle Fang inside, and then we’ll slowly search through this palace.” Youngflame Nong’s words caused everyone to grow calm once more.

No matter what, given that Immortal Witchriver had died more than a hundred million years ago, there were definitely no living creatures within this palace. Thus, it was certainly safer in here than it was outside.

“Whew.” Northson immediately plopped down, seating himself cross-legged, then staring around and calling out, “Senior apprentice-brother, senior apprentice-sister, let’s all sit down and take a break.”

Ning laughed, then sat down in the lotus position as well.

“That scared me to death.” Little Qing reared her serpentine head, blinking repeatedly. The Whitewater Hound also lay down on the ground.

Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, Xue Hongyi, Adept Bu You, and the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn all either sat down or remained standing.

With but a thought from Youngflame Nong...whoosh. In the air in front of them, a fist-sized tunnel appeared. Through the void-tunnel, one could see the outside world, where many monstrous Dao-soldiers were currently fighting against a towering Hydraga Fiendgod!

“Uncle Fang!” Youngflame Nong was somewhat worried as well as he watched.

“Master, if that Fiendgod dies outside, we are in big trouble,” Little Qing sent mentally to Ji Ning. “We’d be trapped inside this palace, unable to leave.”

“Don’t jinx us! Hydraga Fiendgods aren’t so easily killed. What’s more... how could the exalted heir to the position of Godplume Duke of the Youngflame clan just be trapped here?” Ning was still quite calm. Even if the heavens were to collapse upon them, they had a ‘big fellow’ ready to prop it back up. This was a trial which the ancient, vast Youngflame clan had prepared for Youngflame Nong. Perhaps Youngflame Nong might fail the test, but it wasn’t too likely that he would simply be trapped here forever.

.....

Ning’s group remained there, within the palace. They knew that this palace was extremely large, and that there were many places within it, but they didn’t dare to barge about wildly. Who knew which safeguards and protective measures left behind by Immortal Witchriver were still active? If they were unlucky and ran into a particularly powerful defensive mechanism...a large number of them might die.

Better to wait. Wait to reunite with the Hydraga Fiendgod.

As Ning’s group quietly waited. Deep within a corridor, in a hidden passageway within the heart of this vast palace.

This passageway was filled with countless, towering statues. At a glance, one would see eighteen grayish-black statues, each of which were in the shape of a legendary Godbeast, the Qiongqi Manticore. They coiled there within the corridor. Countless years had passed in stillness, but as Ning’s group had entered the quiet, silent, ancient palace...

Something seemed to have been activated. The eighteen Qiongqi Manticore statues all began to glow with golden light, a light which constantly flooded into the statues and made them slowly appear more and more real.

“Snap.” The eyes of one of the Qiongqi Manticores suddenly opened. A pair of jade-green, glowing eyes.

“Snap.” “Snap.” “Snap.” “Snap.” “Snap.” “Snap.”

One Qiongqi Manticore after another opened their eyes. Their eyes were filled with nothing but coldness. They all rose to their feet, and even began to spread their wings. They had a body as thick as an ox's, but were covered with bristling spikes. They also had a pair of giant wings, but the head of a tiger.

These were the most loyal, devoted guards of this palace...the eighteen Qiongqi golems.

Golems were not living creatures, and thus they were truly ageless. Immortal Witchriver's servants and subordinates had all died of old age, but these golems remained here, standing guard despite the passage of ages, continuing to obey Immortal Witchriver's order for them to guard this palace.

“Outsiders have entered the Vault of Treasures,” one of the Qiongqi golems rumbled.

“Not Master.”

“Not Master's heir either. These outsiders forced their way in through using the key to the estate.”

Some particularly powerful golems possessed sentience and intelligence. For example, when Ning had faced the initial trials of the underwater estate, he had encountered that black-furred golem at the third challenge. That golem had actually been filled with an actual spirit, and thus it was even more intelligence.

“Neither Master, nor Master's heirs...all invaders must die.” one of the Qiongqi Manticore golems said.

“Must die.”

“Must die.”

The eighteen Qiongqi golems spoke out in unison.

To truly master the Witchriver Immortal Estate, there were two methods. The first was to possess the key to the estate and then have

Immortal Witchriver bestow a transmission incantation. Naturally, in that situation, all of the formations, restrictive spells, and golems would be obedient. The second method was to possess the key to the estate, then find and bind the five cores within the five palaces. After completely binding all five palace cores, then the entire Immortal estate would be bound; this, too, would be complete control.

Youngflame Nong's trial was to completely control this Immortal estate! But of course, right now, Youngflame Nong was not yet the master of it...which was why the Immortal estate was beginning its counterattacks!

.....

The outermost part of the palace.

Through his void-tunnel, Youngflame Nong was viewing the massive battle going on in the outside part of the Immortal estate. The Hydraga Fiendgod was roaring with rage as blood splattered everywhere; he fought while retreating.

"Faster, faster, faster." Youngflame Nong was extremely worried. Ning, Northson, Yu Wei, and the others were all standing behind him, watching the battle through the void-tunnel as well.

"Given the strength which the Hydraga Fiendgod has demonstrated, I imagine it will be quite hard for him to make it back here. That Yaksha Dao-soldier formation is simply too powerful," Yu Wei sent.

"Right. He's being attacked by two parties right now; one is the massive wave formed from more than ten thousand Dao-soldiers, while the other is the even more powerful Yaksha Dao-soldier formation. Both are more powerful than him..." Adept Vastriver was frowning as he watched as well.

Ninelotus sent mentally, "Given that this Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, was assigned to protect Youngflame Nong, he is definitely carrying some treasures. He's only using those two long awls to battle right now; he hasn't used any other treasures at all. I imagine that he isn't in any real danger yet."

Their group continued to watch the battle through the void-tunnel, while the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn continued to maintain a vigilant watch.

“What’s that?” Ning’s face suddenly changed dramatically, as the space in the surrounding area began to change.

Previously, they were in a hall, but suddenly, their group became trapped in a misty, blurry illusory world. It became extremely hard for them to tell north from south, east from west...they couldn’t even tell up from down.

“Not good.” Youngflame Nong’s face changed as well, and the void-tunnel that had been in front of him disappeared as well.

“A restrictive formation!” Adept Vastriver hurriedly sent mentally, “This palace has a restrictive spell formation which was left behind by Immortal Witchriver. Just now, the restrictive spell formation became activated, and the spell formation covered that hall that we were in just now. Although we are still within the hall, we’ve already become trapped by the formation!”

“The surrounding space has been locked and distorted. Even though I have the key to the Immortal estate, I’m not able to open a tunnel to the outside world either,” Youngflame Nong sent frantically. “Rainbowflame Fairy, Adept Vastriver, Ji Ning...if I’m unable to open a corridor to the outside world, there’s no way for Uncle Fang to come in. It’s up to us now.”

Ning and the others felt their hearts sink. Right. If they were unable to open a corridor to the outside world, then there would be no way for the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, to enter. They had lost their strongest ally.

“Eh?” Ning had a sudden thought. He immediately released his divine sense...but he sensed nothing but a blur. The power of the surrounding restrictive spell had already completely smothered Ning’s divine sense. He couldn’t even sense Mu Northson and the others who were right next to him.

“I have one more bit of news to tell you all. In this formation...divine

sense is of no use,” Ning sent mentally.

“What?” Adept Vastriver and the others were shocked. They gave it a try as well, and as they did, their faces changed. “Even divine sense is unable to see through this formation...then this means that this is definitely no ordinary formation.”

Ning’s group began to unconsciously move closer to each other. As for the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn, they immediately joined together into a formation.

“Is there anyone here skilled in breaking formations? Hurry up and break it,” Youngflame Nong sent.

“Uncle White?” Ning sent to the nearby Whitewater Hound. In recent years, he had spent almost all of his energy on the Dao of formations, and he was definitely superior to Ning in this regard.

“This is a very terrifying formation.” The Whitewater Hound shook his head, continuing to analyze it. But right at this moment...

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Out of nowhere, a throng of icy arrows suddenly shot out, each containing awe-inspiring power as they sprang towards Ning’s group, trapped within the formation.

They were too close, and they were too fast.

“BOOM.” A Waterflame Lotus appeared around Ning, but upon being struck by three attacking arrows, it instantly began to shatter and collapse.

“Careful.” Ning’s face completely changed. These arrows were simply far too powerful; just three arrows contained power great enough to shatter his lotus...

Ning now had a premonition. With their group of Wanxiang Adepts being trapped within this terrifying restrictive formation, most likely, a number of them would truly perish.



# Chapter 8: Casualties

“A single ice shard is capable of killing an ordinary peak Wanxiang Adept.” Adept Vastriver immediately sent urgently, “Everyone, quick, assemble into formation!”

“Assemble into formation; a five-elements pentagonal formation,” Ji Ning sent.

“Right.”

“This is too terrifying,” Mu Northson said loudly.

Rumble...Ning, Northson, Yu Wei, Ninelotus, and Adept Vastriver were of the same school; naturally, they instinctively elected to use a five-elements pentagonal formation of the Black-White College. Combination formations did not need to be purchased with black-white pellets; on the contrary, the disciples of the school were required to learn them.

Their five figures began to move, and instantly, their bodies began to glow with light. Metallic light, red light, watery blue light, yellow light, and azure light.

“Whoosh.” Once their formation was joined, Ning calmed down slightly. “The power of these ice shards is too astonishing; when I fought against Daoist Snowplume, he sent out those drops of skywater against me...but although they were capable of damaging my Waterflame Lotus, they weren’t able to break through it. Those three ice shards, however, were able to break my Waterflame Lotus. This means every single shard contained power comparable to a drop of skywater.”

Daoist Snowplume had only used, in total, 108 drops of skywater...in contrast, these ice shards came in a tightly clustered, endlessly streaming series of attacks.

Most likely, even a Primal Daoist would be killed by this cluster attack!

“Ji Ning, the five of you, stand in front of me,” Youngflame Nong barked mentally. “The other ten of you, stay behind me. Xue Hongyi, Adept Bu You, stay to my sides.”

Ning's group of five was the strongest; after all, three of them were somewhat stronger than ordinary Primal Daoists. After joining forces... they would be the most powerful force present. Naturally, they would have to block in front of Youngflame Nong and help screen him from the ambushing arrows.

As for the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn, although they were somewhat weak, there was still ten of them; when in formation, they were also quite powerful, and thus they could help Youngflame Nong block ice shards from behind.

The remaining gaps would naturally be filled and covered by Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You. The two of them both joined together into the most common of formations, the 'Liangyi Duality Formation'. This formation was one which virtually all Immortal cultivators were capable of, but in turn, it wasn't very effective; there was a limit to how much it could raise one's power. Still, it was still able to increase one's power slightly, and so the two would naturally execute it.

"This is going to be trouble," Xue Hongyi cursed secretly.

"This is going to be very dangerous." Adept Bu You grew frantic as well; the two of them were weaker than Ji Ning to begin with. Ning was now in a five-man formation, while they were only in a two-man formation!

It must be understood that these ice shards were capable of easily killing Primal Daoists.

Swish.

Boom.

Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You were in an extremely dangerous situation.

"Young master Youngflame, we're almost unable to hold on," Xue Hongyi sent frantically.

"I'm unable to hold on for much longer as well," Adept Bu You was similarly frantic.

“How useless,” Youngflame Nong cursed mentally. He was frantic too. “In the end, it’s still those five from the Black-White College who are formidable.”

“Hold for as long as you can...the longer you can hold, the better our chances,” Youngflame Nong sent mentally.

Adept Vastriver sent hurriedly back, “Young master Youngflame, this formation must have been left behind by Immortal Witchriver. If Immortal Witchriver was present and personally controlling it, this formation would perhaps be even more powerful, capable of causing even Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals to perish. Now that he’s gone, the power of it has been lessened a bit, but we won’t be able to resist it for too long. There is a limit to how much elemental ki we have, but the formation utilizes the elemental energy of the natural world...it can persist indefinitely! It can exhaust us to death. The most important thing for us to do right now is to have a formations expert locate a flaw in this formation and break it.”

When trapped within a formation, if a true formations expert was present, he could guide the party through and out from the formation.

If a somewhat weaker formations expert was presence, he could work hard to find some flaws and weaknesses in the formation, then use their most powerful attacks against their weak points. In a situation like that, the chances of victory would naturally be greater.

But if one was too weak in terms of formations...then one would remain trapped within the formation, subject to being trampled upon and incapable of doing anything but using brute force to try and resist. This was the worst case scenario.

“Young master Youngflame, you must have brought a formations expert with you in your investigation of this Immortal estate,” Northson sent.

Youngflame Nong gritted his teeth. A formations expert? Of course he had brought one! But his formations expert was in the outside world of the Immortal estate! It was the Fiendgod - Xiangliu Fang.

Fiendgods were born from the natural world. The Fiendgod Xiangliu

Fang had been born during the Fiendgod Era, and he had survived from then until now; from this, one could imagine how long a life he had lived. However, Fiendgods were different from other races; Fiendgods were truly the favored children of the heavens, the beloved scions of the universe. They were born with the innate ability to train and with innate divine abilities. In fact, some Primordial Fiendgods were even born with mastery over a Dao Path, or even an entire Grand Dao Path.

Thus, Fiendgods did not need to suffer the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations! Their lives were infinite and unlimited! However...

Their training speed, in turn, was incomparably slow. In fact, upon reaching a certain level, they would be unable to improve any further! For example, this Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, had reached the Primal level countless hundreds of millions of years ago, but he remained at the Primal level. Most likely, his potential had been exhausted, and in the future, he would forever remain a Primal.

However, their extremely long lives led them to begin to analyze and train in other areas, such as the Dao of Constructs or formations, which required a tremendous amount of time to research. Thus, although he was a bit weaker in terms of his comprehensive abilities, due to his extremely long life, Xiangliu Fang was a true formations master!

Per their original plan, Xiangliu Fang was to stay right next to Youngflame Nong and protect him. They shouldn't have been separated at all! But earlier...when faced with attacks from so many monstrous Dao-soldiers, someone had to go delay them. Thus, Xiangliu Fang had been separated from the group.

"Uncle Fang!" Youngflame Nong was both frantic and filled with regret. "If I had known this would happen, I wouldn't have left Uncle Fang leave me. After we overcome this tribulation and once he returns, I won't let him leave me again. Absolutely not!"

"Uncle Fang is skilled in formations," Youngflame Nong sent back hurriedly, "But he's completely unable to come inside. Everyone...are any of you skilled in formations?"

“What kind of a sick joke is this?!” Northson was both angry and frantic.

“The Fiendgod is skilled in formations?” Ning and the others were all speechless. The one who was skilled in formations was trapped outside, unable to enter the palace. As for the rest of them, who amongst them was skilled in formations? Although they were all true geniuses, they had all spent all of their energy on their own Daos; even Ji Ning, who was talented in terms of formations, he still primarily spent his time and energy on the Dao of the Sword. He would only occasionally flip through formation scrolls to relieve boredom.

“Adept Vastriver, Rainbowflame Fairy, the two of you are both reincarnated Immortals. In your past lives, I imagine that you must have researched formations before. Can you remember anything about them?” Youngflame Nong sent.

“We are only at the Wanxiang level; we occasionally gain just a few fragments of our memories. The Dao of Formations is an extremely vast and broad one; only after completely awakening our former memories will we be able to master our previous insights regarding formations,” Adept Vastriver sent back helplessly.

.....

Youngflame Nong, Ji Ning, and the others were chatting mentally at an extremely high speed. However, these arrows of ice that were being created and shot out by the formation were also moving at extremely high speed. The two weakest spots in the protective array, Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You, were even beginning to suffer wounds.

“Young master Youngflame, we aren’t able to hold,” Xue Hongyi said, left arm stained red with blood.

“Can’t hold.” Adept Bu You sent hurriedly as well.

“Hurry up and come in.” Youngflame Nong had no choice but to give this order. “Ji Ning, Adept Vastriver...the five of you, you’ll have to cover the locations which Xue Hongyi and Bu You were previously covering.”

Ning’s group had no choice but to grind their teeth and expand the

scope of their formation to cover a wider range. But in doing so, the number of ice shard attacks they suffered increased as well!

“Whew.”

“We were almost finished.”

Upon entering the center, Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You couldn't help but let out sighs of relief. They hurriedly swallowed spirit-pills, replenishing their power and healing.

“What should I do? What should I do?” Youngflame Nong began to ponder frantically. Although he had quite a few protective treasures on him, there was no way for him to break through this ancient, giant formation which a Celestial Immortal had set down. But of course, he could give up on this trial and use a ‘greater teleportation’ to immediately leave.

But upon doing so...that meant that he would have failed his trial. Youngflame Nong absolutely would not permit this to happen.

“I have to break this formation, but how? For now, those five disciples of the Black-White College and those ten Wanxiang Deathsworn are able to hold on, but as time goes on, their elemental ki will begin to deplete, at which point, death will be the result.” Youngflame Nong was frantic.

Right at this moment...

Within the chaotic void of the formation, an enormous, grayish-black, winged, ox-bodied, spiked, tiger-headed golem appeared. It was a Qiongqi Manticore golem! This Qiongqi Manticore suddenly appeared within the formation, and then, with a flutter of its wings, swooped out in an arc, avoiding the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn and clawing towards young master Youngflame at the center.

“Protect young master Youngflame,” Xue Hongyi immediately called out.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

One Qiongqi Manticore golem after another came howling forth. In almost a single instant, eighteen of them appeared in the surrounding

area. For the moment, Ji Ning and the others were all being held down by these other Qiongqi Manticore golems, and were completely unable to protect young master Youngflame.

“Break.”

A sword struck out like a gleam of moonlight, chopping against the head of one of the Qiongqi golems. The Qiongqi golem was knocked backwards by thirty meters, came to halt, then threw itself forward once more.

Ji Ning was surrounded by seven hundred-plus flying swords. Seeing the situation, his face changed. Right now, the five of them were in a formation, and so his own elemental ki naturally had strengthened significantly...and yet, despite using the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], he was still only able to knock the Qiongqi golem back a short distance?

“Careful.”

“These Qiongqi golems all have the combat capability of a Primal Daoist, and their bodies are nigh impenetrable, as hard as magic treasures. They are far more difficult to deal with than ordinary Primal Daoists.” Northson was a genius of the Dao of Constructs; upon seeing these Qiongqi golems, he immediately knew that they were in serious trouble.

“This place actually has golems that are as powerful as Primal Daoists... every single one of them is incomparably precious, and there are a total of eighteen of them here!” Ning struck out with one flash of sword light after another, only just barely managing to tie down two of the Qiongqi Manticore golems.

Golems with the power of Primal Daoists would generally cause even Loose Immortals headaches. However, for a Celestial Immortal... purchasing eighteen golems on this level was still fairly easily done.

.....

Eighteen Qiongqi golems. Ten of them were able to completely tie down

Ji Ning's group of five, as well as the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn. As for the other eight, they charged straight towards Youngflame Nong in the center of the array. These Qiongqi golems were sentient; they knew that Youngflame Nong was the 'bandit chief'."

"Stop them."

"Careful."

By Youngflame Nong's side was Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You. They naturally were caught in the crossfire as well. When these eight Qiongqi golems attacked, both Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You began to panic. This was because every single Qiongqi golem was at least as strong as them. In addition, their 'bodies' were actually magic treasures, and thus were unbreakably tough.

"Riiiiip!" A sharp claw flashed out lightning-fast, slashing past Adept Bu You's body, tearing him apart and sending blood flying everywhere.

"No..." Adept Bu You's eyes were completely round. He had thought that by coming, he would gain young master Youngflame's favor...but in the end, he had lost his life.

The first Wanxiang Adept death in their group had finally occurred.



# Chapter 9: Heavy Casualties, a Change

Adept Bu You's death provoked Youngflame Nong, Ji Ning, and the others. The most provoked of all, of course, Xue Hongyi, whose strength was essentially on par with Adept Bu You.

"I shouldn't have come here. I shouldn't have come here!" Xue Hongyi's eyes were completely red. A Dao-seal appeared in his hand, and it instantly transformed into a barrier of light that covered his body. Boom! It managed to forcibly endure a claw strike from a Qiongqi Manticore Golem. The golden light around his body trembled, but Xue Hongyi seized this chance to quickly escape.

He fled far away!

Ten of the eighteen Qiongqi golems were tied down by Ji Ning's group of five and the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn. As for the other eight, they focused on young master Youngflame. Xue Hongyi, going all out, managed to escape from the center of their array, and for a moment, there were no Qiongqi golems after him.

"Damn, damn." Youngflame Nong gave a cold sideways glance to the distant Xue Hongyi. Earlier, Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You had been at least able to tie down three of the Qiongqi Manticore golems, but now with Adept Bu You slain and Xue Hongyi fled...the eight golems were completely surrounding and focusing on Youngflame Nong himself.

A pitiable look appeared on Xue Hongyi's face, and he frantically sent mentally, "Young master Youngflame, I'm truly unable to stop them. Brother Bu You has already died; even if I were to resist, in just a few breaths, I would lose my life."

Young master Youngflame was extremely angry, but he knew that these people weren't his slaves, nor were they Deathsworn; in the face of certain death, it was normal for them to flee.

"Damn, damn, damn! If I can reunite with Uncle Fang...within this Witchriver Immortal Estate, I'm never going to let him leave my side again, ever!" Youngflame Nong truly felt regret for having allowed

Xiangliu Fang to depart. If he had known that this would be the result, he would've simply used two of his treasures to lock down the two groups of monstrous Dao-soldiers.

Treasures capable of blocking more than ten thousand linked Dao-soldiers were naturally extraordinary, and young master Youngflame hadn't been willing to use them up. But now, it was too late for regret.

....

Young master Youngflame stood there, a crimson red salamander coiling around him. The crimson salamander was emanating a terrifying aura, and it repeatedly slashed its claws against the attacking Qiongqi golems.

Bang! Bang! Bang! One golem after another was sent flying back.

The long tail of the Redscale Salamander slapped out repeatedly as well, but the 'body' of the Qiongqi golems was composed of magic treasures; they were unbreakable. Thus, they didn't fear being struck, and they wildly surrounded and attacked Youngflame Nong. The sharp claws of the Qiongqi golems left enormous, gaping wounds on the body of the Redscale Salamander as well, tearing its scales open and sending blood spraying everywhere.

However, the Redscale Salamander was able to heal its wounds at an astonishing rate, and it continued to go all out in its battle against these Qiongqi golems.

This single Godbeast, the Redscale Salamander, was blocking eight Qiongqi Manticore golems!

"What a formidable Redscale Salamander." Although Ning was fighting, he was also keeping an eye on the overall situation. The power of the Redscale Salamander made him sigh in amazement. "It lives up to its reputation as possessing one of the most exalted Godbeast lineages. In addition, it should also have trained in Fiendgod Body Refining; although it is only at the Wanxiang level, it already has combat prowess comparable to a peak Primal. Even if I were to unleash all my power, I would probably only be on par with it."

Ning was currently utilizing his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. Although he was being supported by the five-elements pentagonal formation, the power of it was still a bit weaker than his close combat prowess.

“Clank.”

“Clank.”

Ning’s group was working extremely hard to block the Qiongqi golems. From the side, those icy shards continued to fill the air and shoot towards them at high speed as well. However, the Qiongqi golems were also accidentally struck by and injured by the ice shards; after all, they were only capable of activating the formation, not controlling it.

Only the master of the Immortal estate and the heir to Immortal estate were able to truly control the formation. Without a controller, the icy shards were unable to differentiate between friend or foe. However, since the Qiongqi golems had treasure-like bodies, they didn’t care about the attacks from the icy shards.

“Not good.” Ning’s face suddenly changed.

“This is trouble.” Adept Vastriver was shocked as well.

All of them had been keeping an eye on the overall flow of battle. Those eight Qiongqi golems that previously had been surrounding and attacking young master Youngflame, due to being constantly blocked by the Godbeast, ‘Redscale Salamander’, actually gave up attacking him and instead immediately threw themselves towards the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn.

Comparatively speaking, the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn were a bit weaker. However, their wills were joined, and after having entered the grand formation, they were capable of tying down three of the Qiongqi Manticore golems.

However, when eight more of the golems suddenly charged towards them, this meant that the number of golems they were facing instantly reached eleven.

If the eleven golems were attacking Ning's group of five, the five of them would've been able to hold on, but they were attacking the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn instead...

....

"HALT!" Youngflame Nong was enraged. Up till now, he had not personally intervened, but at this moment, an enormous black whip suddenly appeared out of nowhere into his hands. The black whip was covered with a flowing layer of black firelight. He snapped the whip out powerfully, and it lashed through the air, striking towards the Qiongqi golems in the distance.

BOOM!

The long whip struck one of the Qiongqi golems, and immediately knocked it backwards, sending flying all the way out of the formation, causing it to disappear from Ning's field of vision.

BOOM! BOOM! Young master Youngflame lashed his whip out repeatedly, each strike carrying inconceivable power and sending each stricken Qiongqi Manticore golem flying backwards.

"Formidable."

"Terrifying."

"Powerful."

Ning and the others were all shocked. None of them had imagined that this young master Youngflame was so powerful. In fact, at a single glance, Ning was able to tell for certain that the fire covering the whip which young master Youngflame was using was actually 'earthfire'. And, unless he was mistaken, it was earthfire that should have reached the first grade, which was why it was comparable to ordinary skyfire in might!

"His flames are formed from first-grade earthfire. That whip is strange as well. In addition, young master Youngflame's aura suddenly exploded with might; it must be some secret technique." Ning sighed mentally at what he had seen. This ancient, massive Youngflame clan clearly had made multifaceted preparations for the upbringing of their next clan

leader. His combat power, at the very least, was amazing. The man was definitely at the same level as Ning himself and Yu Wei, and his treasures were even more powerful!

“No!” A look of utmost anger appeared on Youngflame Nong’s face.

Although his whip had sent three Qiongqi golems flying in sequence, Youngflame Nong was, after all, just a single person...and there were eleven golems attacking. Thus, the other eight Qiongqi golems, accompanied by a large number of icy shards, continued to tear into and through the formation of the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn, ripping one of them into tiny pieces.

The death of one caused the strength of the other nine to immediately fall dramatically. And, at this moment, those three Qiongqi Manticore golems that had been sent flying out of the formation now came flying back inside. They were completely undamaged, and they once more threw themselves towards the nine Wanxiang Deathsworn.”

“Kill.”

“Master, we are leaving now.”

BOOM.

BANG.

RIP.

These Wanxiang Adepts did not fear death, but they were still torn apart, one by one, by the Qiongqi golems. Some were torn apart, while others were flattened to death by blows from the Qiongqi golems’ wings. In virtually just a single breath’s worth of time, the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn had all died.

Young master Youngflame was utterly enraged, but he didn’t dare to allow the Redscale Salamander by his side to leave, because he himself was not an Fiendgod Body Refiner. In close combat, he was at a huge disadvantage, and so the Redscale Salamander had to stay next to him to protect him.

“Kill those five.”

“Kill them.”

The eleven Qiongqi Manticore golems didn't even look at Youngflame Nong; they threw themselves directly towards the five disciples of the Black-White College.

When Ning's group had seen how the Qiongqi golems had surrounded and killed those ten Wanxiang Deathsworn, they knew that things had taken a turn for the worse. However, they were being tied down by these other seven golems...after all, of the five, the three most powerful were Ji Ning, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver, with Ninelotus and Mu Northson being comparatively weaker.

“Ji Ning, Rainbowflame Fairy, Adept Vastriver,” Young master Youngflame sent frantically, “Be careful of those Qiongqi golems. You have to be able to hold.”

“Damn these detestable Qiongqi golems. Damn them! First, they killed my ten Deathsworn, and now they are going to kill Ji Ning's group.” Young master Youngflame knew exactly what was going on. Ning's group was helping him tie down quite a few of the Qiongqi golems; if they were to die, then all eighteen golems would encircle and attack him. Although he had many magic treasures, his only choice would be to use the greater teleportation seal and flee. But upon fleeing, he would have failed this trial, and in the future, his chances of becoming the next Godplume Duke would be lessened. He absolutely would not permit this to happen.

“Ji Ning, let me in. Xue Hongyi, get the f\*ck over here as well.”

Young master Youngflame and his Redscale Salamander, as well as the terrified Xue Hongyi, flew directly into the five-person formation which Ning's group had set up. Ning's group naturally did not prevent them from doing so.

“Attack.” Young master Youngflame, a sinister look on his face, gave the order, then immediately began to brandish his long black whip, blazing with black fire. As for the Redscale Salamander, it stretched half of its body outside, sending its claws towards the Qiongqi golems in raking

attacks. Xue Hongyi also used all of his magic treasures, wanting to make up for his earlier transgression of fleeing.

“Young master Youngflame,” Ning sent suddenly.

“What is it?” Young master Youngflame was in an extremely foul mood right now, but to one of his main sources of support, Ji Ning, he still maintained an air of courtesy.

“The spirit-beast under my control, the Whitewater Hound, is exceedingly well-versed in the Dao of Formations, and he has studied it for a long time. He’s already discovered a flaw in the formation, and is confident in being able to break it,” Ning sent.

Young master Youngflame had been in an utterly furious mood, but upon hearing Ning’s words, he couldn’t help but feel a hint of eagerness and disbelief. “Did you just say that the spirit-beast you control, that Whitewater Hound, is able to break this formation? This is a formation which Immortal Witchriver set down. He is actually able to break a formation set down by a Celestial Immortal? Are you sure he can do it?”

It wasn’t that he was belittling the Whitewater Hound; rather, he didn’t believe the Whitewater Hound could possibly be that gifted in formations.

“Young master Youngflame, although this is a formation left behind by Immortal Witchriver, he himself wasn’t necessarily skilled in formations. In addition, although this formation is formidable, there isn’t anyone currently controlling it. A formation which no one is controlling...is extremely clumsy and not at all agile,” Ning sent hurriedly. “My Whitewater Hound spirit-beast, by using the Fuxi Staff Formation, is absolutely capable of breaking this formation.”

“Fuxi Staff Formation? Fine, I’ll trust you. I have a set of top-grade Fuxi Staff Formation treasures; use them, and the power of his formation will definitely increase.” At a time like this, young master Youngflame wouldn’t be stingy at all; he immediately took out a set of top-grade Fuxi Staff Formation artifacts, then tossed them over.

Behind Ning was the Whitewater Hound, who had yet to fight and had

spent this entire period of time focusing on analyzing the formation. He sent a surge of elemental ki out from his body, wrapping it around the completely ownerless Fuxi Staff Formation artifacts and easily binding them.

“Uncle White, you truly feel confident?” Ning sent.

“Don’t worry, Ning, my son. I’ve spent a long time analyzing this formation, and am absolutely certain that I’ll be able to break it. This formation, despite being incomparably powerful, has no one at the helm. You should know that the more powerful a formation is, the more complicated it is as well. The formation is only able to unleash such power because it is drawing in the natural energy of the world, then transforming it through repeated cycles; as long as we are able ‘choke’ a single part of the cycle, then the entire formation will become useless.”

“If this formation had someone controlling it, then he naturally would be constantly changing things. It would be extremely hard to break the formation. But without a controller, it is hundreds and thousands of times easier to break this formation,” the Whitewater Hound said. “And with these unexpected top-grade Fuxi Staff Formation artifacts...well, young master Youngflame really is quite generous.”



# Chapter 10: This is the Vault of Treasures

“That’s because you, Uncle White, are capable of breaking the formation,” Ji Ning sent mentally. “Uncle White, we have no time to waste. Hurry up and break it. If there’s anything you need, just speak out; young master Youngflame will definitely provide it.

“Keep these Qiongqi golems a bit farther away; make it so that within thirty meters, I won’t be disturbed in the slightest.”

“Alright.”

Ji Ning immediately sent mentally, “Young master Youngflame, everyone, we are going to expand the scope of this five elements formation.”

“Expand it? The larger we make the formation, the more ice shards will strike us,” Adept Vastriver said frantically.

“My Whitewater Hound spirit-beast is able to break this formation, but he needs thirty meters of space to do so,” Ning sent.

“Break the formation?”

“Truly?”

All of them were both delighted and shocked. Youngflame Nong urged frantically, “Everyone, hurry up and do your best to hold on for a period of time.” After finishing his words, he gave Xue Hongyi a hard look, and Xue Hongyi hurriedly tried to make it appear as though he truly was going all out and risking his life to hold on.

Rumble...

The formation expanded. Youngflame Nong and his Redscale Salamander displayed their might as well; the two of them, man and spirit-beast, were able to simultaneously tie down eight of those Qiongqi Manticore golems, while Xue Hongyi managed to block one as well. As for Ji Ning and the rest of the five, they were able to block the other nine Qiongqi golems. For a period of time, the group was actually able to overpower the golems and deliver blows to them.

However, while they were overpowering the golems, they still had to divert part of their attention and efforts to blocking the icy shards. Each of them were using up astonishing amounts of elemental ki; they were all operating at maximum power, a state which they couldn't maintain for too long.

“Arise.”

A large, snowy white hound was in the very center of the entire formation. Around him were ancient, simple-looking wooden staffs that were covered with magic runes. The staffs suddenly flew out in every direction, quickly landing in various areas. As each staff landed down, the space around them seemed to have been ‘nailed down’. All sixty four Fuxi Staffs descended on their respective locations.

Every single staff suddenly began to glow with an eye-catching, watery glow. In addition, lines of watery light began to connect between the staffs, forming an incomparably massive seal-formation.

Rumble...

The seal-formation actually began to merge with the giant formation around them.

It was like a drop of black water, falling onto a spotless white cloth, or a iron spike that was thrust into the spokes of a wheel; in short, the grand formation which had previously been incomparably harmonious and perfect was suddenly, instantly, ‘stuck’. In turn, the incomparably powerful surges of elemental energy from the natural world ceased to flow, and the attacking ice shards suddenly began to weaken in power. In but a single breath's worth of time, they all vanished into nowhere.

And then, the entire grand formation itself completely vanished.

The ancient hall that they had been in previously once more appeared within Ning's field of vision. They were still within the hall; they had never actually left it.

“The formation is broken?”

Youngflame Nong was stunned for a moment, but then he was wildly

overjoyed. When he had been trapped within the formation, he had been consumed with the agony of despair and bitterness. Now that he had been released from it...it was hard for him to express the joy in his heart through words.

“Formidable, formidable.” Mu Northson blinked his eyes as he looked at the large, snowy white dog in their midst.

“What a formidable Whitewater Hound.” Adept Vastriver looked at the snowy white dog as well.

“Uncle White, you really are formidable,” Ninelotus sent mentally as well.

All of them were absolutely overjoyed.

Although Xue Hongyi was surprised and delighted at their escape, in his heart, he still felt extremely displeased. “Even his spirit-beast is as formidable as this in formations...why the hell don’t I have such a powerful spirit-beast? Damnable, absolutely damanable...this time, Ji Ning once again became the one to accumulate great merits in front of young master Youngflame.”

.....

No longer having to worry about the constant attacks from the overwhelming number of icy arrows, Ning and the others instantly exploded with power. By relying on the five-elements pentagonal formation, Ning, Adept Vastriver, and Yu Wei were each able to lock down four of the Qiongi golems, while Ninelotus, Northson, and Xue Hongyi were each able to lock down one. The Redscale Salamander, by itself, was able to block all of the other golems.

It was now extremely easy. Young master Youngflame didn’t even need to personally intervene; all eighteen of the golems were now locked down.

“Uncle Fang, the formation has been broken. You can come in now.” Youngflame Nong sent a spiritual message to Xiangliu Fang, who was still outside.

The two had set up a soul-bind long ago. Xiangliu Fang, this Fiendgod,

was Youngflame Nong's most loyal servant; otherwise, how could the Youngflame clan be comfortable with sending a Fiendgod to accompany their young master?

.....

Xiangliu Fang had successfully fled to the outside perimeter of this palace long ago, but unfortunately, he wasn't able to enter. Thus, he could only continue to run about and flee outside of it. The entire Immortal estate was only a few tens of thousands of kilometers in size; it truly was too small. Xiangliu Fang had already completely circumnavigated this world once.

"Stop chasing."

"That Fiendgod is too crafty."

"And he won't die."

The two mightiest monstrous powers in the Immortal estate world had both given up their chase. Although their attacks on Xiangliu Fang had caused him repeated injuries, as a Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang's recuperative abilities were simply too astonishing. In addition, he had been using evasive techniques, causing his speed to vastly outstrip the combined Dao-soldier armies. After repeated engagements, the two forces had given up.

"This Fiendgod isn't easy to deal with, but those humans that came in with him are far weaker. This Fiendgod is a protector for one of them; once they come out, we'll kill the humans, then seize the key to the Immortal estate." These monstrous powers were also waiting outside the Vault of Treasures, one of the five palaces of the Immortal estate.

As soon as Ning's group came out, they would surround them and kill them!

This was their one and only chance at seizing the key to the Immortal estate. Leaving this Immortal estate world was something which the various monstrous races here had hoped and dreamed about for countless ages. Their ancestors had all passed down legends of how incomparably

vast the outside world was, and how even Immortals could fly for days and nights without reaching the ends of the world.

Days and nights?

The monsters of the Immortal estate world couldn't even imagine such a thing, because in the Immortal estate world, a Loose Immortal could completely circumnavigate the world in as much time as was needed to boil a kettle of tea.

"I truly want to leave."

"I truly want to see that vast, endless world." All the monsters shared this feeling.

At this moment, the distant Xiangliu Fang was still awaiting Youngflame Nong's spirit-message; both of them had extremely powerful souls, and thus they could naturally communicate spiritually at a fairly long distance.

"The young master is trapped within a formation in that palace...what should I do?" Xiangliu Fang was worried as well. "I can't go in. If no one can break the formation and the young master remains trapped in it...in the end, I'm afraid he'll give up and leave, but if he does, that means he will have failed this trial."

Xiangliu Fang was worried, but he had no way of entering.

"Uncle Fang, the formation is broken. You can come in now," Youngflame Nong sent spiritually.

"The formation is broken?" Xiangliu Fang was amazed and delighted. He immediately transformed into a streak of light and flew towards the palace.

Swoosh!

He flew over at high speed.

"That Fiendgod is coming again."

"We can't kill him...why's he coming?"

“Can it be that he wants to enter the palace? Let’s follow him and go in together.” The monstrous Dao-soldiers reformed into that titanic wave and the Yaksha Dao-soldier. They looked at the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, but didn’t attack.

Whoosh. In midair, an enormous palace door suddenly appeared, and then the door swung open. Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang had just reached that location. With a swoosh, he flew through the palace door...and then, the illusory door once more vanished.

Xiangliu Fang and young master Youngflame’s coordination was simply perfect. As soon as he had arrived, the door had appeared, and as soon as he entered, the palace door had once more shut, causing the pursuing Dao-soldiers that were right behind him to be unable to enter at all. After all, Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang was faster than them to begin with.

“Wait! I refuse to believe he won’t come out! As soon as they come out, we’ll first kill those humans, then seize the key to the Immortal estate.” The monstrous Dao-soldiers could only choose to wait patiently.

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Within the massive palace hall. Ning’s group was still fighting back against the wildly attacking Qiongqi golems.

“Swoosh.” A figure suddenly charged in. It was a pitch-black, narrow-eyed, middle-aged man...the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang.

“Uncle Fang.” Youngflame Nong was delighted. Finally, he had reunited with Uncle Fang. After seeing Uncle Fang, his restless, uneasy heart finally calmed down. With Uncle Fang present, he was safe.

Upon entering, Xiangliu Fang immediately saw those Qiongqi Manticore golems.

“Golems?” Xiangliu Fang, with a single step, arrived next to one of the Qiongqi golems. The golem immediately bellowed, slashing out with his claws and wanting to tear Xiangliu Fang apart. But what welcomed it was Xiangliu Fang’s fist!

BOOM!

The fist smashed directly upon the Qiongi golem, like the descent of a meteor, knocking it flying back and, with a titanic smashing out, sending it smashing hard against the walls of the palace. The walls of the Immortal estate were incomparably sturdy, while the Qiongqi golem itself was a magic artifact; neither were damaged. However, the Qiongqi golem first slumped to the ground, before them clambering back to its feet.

“A Primal golem?” Xiangliu Fang frowned, and then he threw out an enormous sack. “Come.” Xiangliu Fang waved his large hands, and then his ten fingers transformed into ten giant snakes, filling the air as they seized two of the Qiongqi golems. The two Qiongqi golems struggled viciously, but weren’t able to escape from Xiangliu Fang’s snake-hands.

“Get in.” After having seized the two Qiongqi golems, Xiangliu Fang tossed them directly into the sack.

Xiangliu Fang moved as fast as lightning, his giant hands filled with boundless, awe-inspiring might. Clearly, this was a powerful divine ability he had access to. With power far greater than that of the Qiongqi golems, he snatched them two or three at a time. In the blink of an eye, all eighteen of the golems had been seized and thrown into the sack; they didn’t even have a chance to flee.

“So powerful.” Ning and the others were stupefied and speechless with amazement.

“Uncle Fang.” Youngflame Nong was delighted.

Xiangliu Fang nodded, then gave a sideways glance to the Whitewater Hound, who was still maintaining the formation. He said softly, “Whitewater Hound? There are very few monsters who are skilled in formations. Whitewater Hounds are indeed extremely intelligent and well-suited for analyzing formations.”

After speaking, Xiangliu Fang transformed into a streak of light.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! He flew to three places, smashing down viciously with his fist. Although the palace itself was undamaged, some of its decorations, such as its giant chandeliers and drapes, were smashed

into tiny bits.

“Alright. I’ve already blocked the critical chokepoints to the formation.” Xiangliu Fang looked towards the Whitewater Hound. “No need for you to constantly maintain the formation.”

The Whitewater Hound retrieved the artifacts from his Fuxi Staff Formation, and indeed, the previously active enemy formation didn’t respond at all.

“Whew.” Ning and the others shared glances, then revealed smiles. With an expert present, things would indeed be much simpler going forward.

“Eh?” Xiangliu Fang frowned slightly as he looked towards a distant place in the palace. He pointed towards it, and instantly, a ray of black divine power flew out from his finger, striking against the distant palace wall. Three giant characters instantly appeared on the wall - VAULT OF TREASURES.

“The Vault of Treasures?” Ning, Northson, and Xue Hongyi were all overjoyed.

The Immortal estate world had a total of five palaces. Ning’s group had no idea what the palace they had entered was meant for. Now, upon seeing those three characters, they knew immediately that this must be for storing treasures! Originally, Youngflame Nong had promised that any treasures they were capable of acquiring from within the Immortal estate would be theirs!



# Chapter 11: The Treasure Vault of a Celestial Immortal

“Don’t be impatient.” Youngflame Nong could naturally tell what Ji Ning and the others were thinking. Smiling, he said, “The treasures aren’t going anywhere. As I said to you, and as I even promised in the name of the Youngflame clan, anything you acquire will belong to you.”

Ji Ning and the others all nodded.

“And these.” Youngflame Nong pointed towards the ground nearby. On the ground were the magic treasures left behind by Adept Bu You and the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn.

“This time, we were trapped within the Immortal estate’s formation; it was thanks to Ji Ning’s spirit-beast that we were able to break through it. These magic treasures aren’t worth that much; Ji Ning, go ahead and take them.” Youngflame Nong looked towards Ning, who didn’t hesitate; he immediately collected all of the various magic treasures. After all, these were treasures from eleven Wanxiang Adepts, one of whom was a two-clawed Raindragon Guard. This sort of treasure was quite valuable.

Xue Hongyi looked at Ning, musing secretly to himself, “Damn your luck! I want to see how long it holds!”

Although he felt jealous hatred, he still understood that right now, the Black-White College’s five disciples held the advantage in power.

“Let’s go.” Youngflame Nong now appeared much more relaxed. With Xiangliu Fang by his side, he began to walk leisurely to the front.

Each of the five palaces were extremely large. However, Xiangliu Fang was a true expert of formations; he led them with ease through the various corridors, and they thus naturally made their way towards the heart of the entire palace. Just a short while later, Ning’s group arrived at an incomparably wide hall within the palace, filled with a jade bed at the front and prayer mats below.

The jade bed was most likely where Immortal Witchriver used to sit and

meditate.

“This is...!?” Youngflame Nong suddenly stared at the jade bed. His Immortal estate key was vibrating strongly, having sensed where the heart of this palace was.

“That jade bed is the core of this palace,” Youngflame Nong said.

“Young master, let me take a look.” Xiangliu Fang stretched his hands out. His hands instantly expanded, and his ten fingers transformed into ten giant snakes which filled the air and swarmed the region. After sweeping past the region, he nodded and said, “Young master, there are no dangers here.”

Only now did Youngflame Nong, with a swoosh, scurry to the top of the jade bed. He sat down in the lotus position, then began to fill the jade bed below him with elemental ki.

This jade bed was the core of this palace, the Vault of Treasures. Every palace had a core, and if one could bind them all, the entire Immortal estate would be bound as well. The test the Youngflame clan had given Youngflame Nong was to have him completely bind this Immortal estate.

“Alright. The rest of you can go,” Youngflame Nong said, seated on the jade bed, “And search to your hearts’ content for the treasures which Immortal Witchriver left behind here. I won’t go.”

Xiangliu Fang stood at the jade bed as well, quietly standing guard.

Ning and the others exchanged a glance, secretly celebrating. If the most powerful member of their group, the Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang, was not going to compete with them for treasures, it would be wonderful.

“I’ve already begun to bind the core of this palace. None of the restrictive spells within this palace will activate, so the only thing you need to worry about are golems lying in wait,” Youngflame Nong said with a loud laugh. “However, my guess is that this palace doesn’t have any golems left. If there were, they would’ve attacked us long ago.”

“Young master Youngflame, we’ll go search for treasures, then.” Ning and the others didn’t stay here any longer; they immediately departed.

They had arrived in hall together, but now, they immediately parted ways.

“Senior apprentice-brother, treasure-hunting is a matter of individual luck,” Northson said with extraordinary excitement.

“There might be Immortal-ranked magic treasures,” Adept Vastriver said with great eagerness as well.

“It’s up to destiny,” Ninelotus said.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! They all quickly parted ways. Even the Whitewater Hound and Little Qing parted ways from Ning, moving out on their own.

“I refuse to believe you’ll be that damn lucky.” Xue Hongyi, at the rear of the procession, had a cold look on his face. He chose a pathway for himself, then began to search.

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The Vault of Treasures, one of the five palaces of the estate, was simply too vast.

“And my divine sense can’t even penetrate through the walls here?” Ning had no other options; he had to rely on the simplest, most rudimentary of methods to search; push through the doors of each room and search them.”

Rumble. A stone door was pushed out. Ning swept the inside of the room with his divine sense while also scanning it with his eyes. “Not this one.”

Rumble. Yet another stone door was pushed open, and Ning searched this room as well. “Not this one either.”

“Nope.”

“Not this one.”

Ning quickly searched through multiple rooms.

Rumble! Ning pushed open the door to the sixth room. “Not this one eith-...eh? This is...?!”

Ning's eyes instantly turned bloodshot with excitement. He hurriedly shut the door to the study, then entered.

Surges of ripples emanated from the magic treasures in this room. Ning stared at the magic treasures and sensed the rippling waves of energy coming from them, and felt as though he were in a dream.

"I actually was the one to discover the true Treasure Vault. It seems I really am lucky." Ning swept the room with his gaze. Upon an enormous display case, there were many magic treasures, including ropes, flying swords, gongs, disks, needles, awls, nails, sacks, warhammers, seals, staffs, ribbons, horsetail whisks, fog bottles, jade flasks, colored clothes, powders, armbands...

The amount of treasure here was simply astonishing. They all had different auras of power as well; the ones closest to Ning had ripples of power that were a bit weaker, while the more distant ones were more powerful. Clearly, these magic treasures were divided up by power levels.

"So many magic treasures...how could Immortal Witchriver possibly have a use for all of them?" Ning sighed gently, but suddenly, he thought about the so-called 'Witchriver clan' which he had encountered in the outside areas of the Immortal estate world. "Right. Immortal Witchriver, as a Celestial Immortal, naturally had many, many monstrous attendants. Of course he would want to be able to take good care of them and provide resources for them."

It was much like how Ning had made certain preparations for the Ji clan as well. Immortal Witchriver had made preparations to strengthen his descendants. In addition, as a Celestial Immortal, Immortal Witchriver naturally had far more members in his clan than the Ji clan did. In turn, then, he would need to be extremely strict in handing out magic treasures. He must have created this 'Vault of Treasures', with clansmen who had rendered meritorious deeds or who had extremely good talent being provided gifts. This was only logical.

"Bind them!" Ning's body instantly emanated streaks of elemental ki, like ribbons of light, filling the air with them as he shot them towards the

magic treasures. Countless years had passed; even if the treasures did have masters in the distant past, by now, there wasn't even the slightest bit of vestigial ki within them, and they were extremely easy to bind.

"These are Mortal-ranked. These are Earth-ranked...I'm unable to bind this one! Haha, it has to at least be a Heaven-ranked magic treasure." Ning could no longer remain calm, beginning to laugh wildly.

He had hit the jackpot!

He had truly hit the jackpot today. This was a stroke of tremendously good fortune. He originally had thought that Immortal Witchriver would carry his most important treasures with him, and thus logically the Vault of Treasures wouldn't have too many treasures within, but in reality, within this treasure room, there was a veritable sea of treasures, all of which Immortal Witchriver had prepared for his clansmen.

A few poor Witchriver clansmen had been trapped within the Vault of Treasures after Immortal Witchriver's death, forever unable to leave. They had died within the vault of old age. Fortunately, however, the Witchriver clansmen outside the vault had some other treasures as well. Still, despite that, they were only able to be local hegemonies in the outside world of this Immortal estate world.

In as much time as was needed to boil a kettle of tea, Ning completely bound everything he could.

"My heavens." Ning took a deep breath, his heart pounding so loudly, he felt as though he could audibly hear his heartbeats. This was simply too amazing.

"More than 180,000 Mortal-ranked treasures, more than 16,000 Earth-ranked treasures, and more than a hundred treasures which I could not bind." Ning was somewhat stunned. This...this was too amazing. Although he had already been an extremely wealthy Wanxiang Adept, compared to this sea of treasures...there was no comparison at all.

"Even Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals probably don't have this much," Ning sighed in amazement. "Celestial Immortals live up to their reputation. Even a small fraction of their wealth is far beyond what

ordinary Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals possess.”

“I’m taking this.”

“And this.”

“My precious, my precious, all of you, come here.” Ning was absolutely giddy. He collected up all the Mortal-ranked magic treasures, storing them in his storage magic treasure, then stored all of the Earth-ranked magic treasures into his Zifu region. His Zifu was incomparably vast; even the 16,000-plus Earth-ranked magic treasures only took up a small corner of his Zifu.

Swoosh! Ning, with a flash, instantly arrived next to one of the longest display counters. This display counter was covered with magic treasures that emanated powerful ripples; Ning wasn’t able to bind any of them.

“Unless I’m mistaken, these should be Heaven-ranked,” Ning said softly. Although he was unable to bind them, which meant they could also be Immortal-ranked treasures, logic argued against it. Although the magic treasures atop this long table emanated ripples that were different in power, the general strength of the ripples were roughly on the same level.

Most likely, some were middle-grade Heaven-ranked magic treasures, while others were high-grade or even top-grade.

“Even Primal Daoists generally only have a few Heaven-ranked magic treasures, but I have more than a hundred. And, given that they were stored away by a Celestial Immortal, I imagine that none of them are weak.” Ning could feel his blood pumping.

It must be understood that even the weakest, low-grade Heaven-ranked magic treasures could only be purchased with five hundred kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. Slightly better treasures would cost much more, upwards of five thousand kilograms.

If, theoretically...

If all of these hundred-plus magic treasures were Heaven-ranked, and all of them were slightly better than low-grade, without a single top-grade...they would still be worth nearly five hundred thousand kilograms

of liquefied elemental essence! This was a sum that was enough to cause even Earth Immortals or Loose Immortals to feel their hearts tremble.

“A Celestial Immortal could pluck a hair from his head, and it would still be thicker than my legs. And what I have here isn’t just one of his ‘hairs’...it’s more like one of his ‘legs’!” Ji Ning was simply too excited. He actually began to ramble and spout nonsense, while mentally calculating the worth of these Heaven-ranked magic treasures. The powerful ripples emanating from them caused Ning to feel incomparably delighted, especially because several of the ripples were extremely strong, which caused Ning to feel even more pleasure.

“Haha, the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]? Just 700 Earth-ranked magic treasures...that’s nothing!” Ning continued to celebrate. “In training to the Second Cycle of the [Six Cycles of the Starseizer], I’ll also need a lot of precious materials, but with this, I can go trade for them at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.”

Previously, he had been extremely tight on money. He felt that he was extremely poor, unable to buy this and unable to buy that. Now, however, he suddenly felt that he was extremely rich. Even ordinary Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals were a bit less wealthy than him! But of course, some of the top-class Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals were still wealthier.

“In you go.” After savoring the feeling for a while, Ning began to collect these powerful Heaven-ranked magic treasures as well. As he was unable to bind them for now, he had no choice but to put them within his storage-type magic treasure.

“This trip with Youngflame Nong to this Celestial Immortal’s estate was absolutely worth it. Celestial Immortals...Celestial Immortals...they really live up to their reputations.” Ning had completely cleaned out all of the treasures within this room. Suddenly, he blinked. “Hey...these display tables that held the magic treasures...the wood seems to be quite extraordinary. Slumberghost Waterwood? A single kilogram of it is equivalent in value to two taels...there has to be a million kilograms worth of Slumberghost Waterwood here. Mm, makes sense...Immortal

Witchriver put the magic treasures on the display tables for his descendants to look at. Of course he had to procure some good tables. I'm taking this as well! And this one here!"

Ning collected up all of the tables and cases within this room as well. The entire room was now completely empty. Not a single thing was left.



# Chapter 12: An Immortal-Ranked Magic Treasure Emerges

Ji Ning, feeling incomparably delighted, walked out of the treasure storeroom. "This was a tremendous stroke of fortune. No wonder so many Immortal cultivators, despite knowing some places are dangerous, insist on going into them. It is because they hope for strokes of fortune like this. With such wealth...my power will increase tremendously, and my ability to stay alive will improve tremendously as well."

As long as he had enough treasures, he would be able to trade for what he needed at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.

Life-saving items, fleeing items, support items, Ki Refining techniques, divine abilities...as long as he was willing to pay a high enough price, he could acquire them all!

Although Ning currently had those two extremely powerful life-protecting items from the underwater estate, one of which had even been personally created by Daoist Threelives...two wasn't enough. The likes of young master Youngflame definitely carried more than ten life-saving items by his side.

"If I had so many treasures to begin with, my earthfire and dire-ice would've been raised to the first grade long ago." Ning continued to advance through the corridors at high speed, pushing open the doors to one study after another.

Rumble. "Nothing here."

"Nothing here either." Ning continued to search.

Given how enormous the Vault of Treasures was, aside from the items treasure storeroom he had located, there might be other treasures present. Just as Ning was continuing to relaxedly search, suddenly...

BOOM!

The entire region seemed to tremble, causing Ning's skin and hair to

begin to shake. Ning couldn't help but turn his head to look at the corridor behind him. Deep from the ends of that corridor, an incomparably powerful ripple was surging forth.

"A magic treasure ripple." Ning, having seen so many magic treasures earlier in the treasure hall, immediately came to this conclusion. "In addition, this ripple is far more powerful than the ripples that were given off by the Heaven-ranked magic treasures in that storeroom!"

Instantly, a thought flashed past Ning's mind. Immortal-ranked magic treasure! "It has to be an Immortal-ranked treasure." Ning instantly swept forward, moving towards the direction of the ripple at high speed.

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"This material is excellent. I can use it to create constructs." Northson was searching within the palace as well, and he didn't hold back at all. He immediately collected all of the drapes, tables, and prayer mats he found on his path through. "Just now, I discovered long-decayed corpses with magic treasures that even I am unable to bind. I imagine they must be Heaven-ranked, while the dead were Primal Diremonsters. Heh heh, one more corpse, please, one more corpse!"

When Immortal Witchriver had died, the palace had instantly become sealed off.

Generally speaking, those granted access to this palace were experts of high status. However, trapped within, they had no escape, eventually dying of old age! They left behind their corpses, and all of the treasures next to the corpses were extraordinary.

"One more corpse, please..." Northson's gaze was blazing as he continued to search.

Rumble!

A powerful ripple surged forth. Northson was momentarily stunned, and then he immediately turned to face a sideways, curving corridor, letting out a surprised howl. "It must be an Immortal-ranked magic treasure." And then, he immediately transformed into a streak of light, flying over.

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“Why doesn’t this Vault of Treasures have anything? I wonder if the others found anything.” Adept Vastriver had nothing to show for his efforts, finding nothing on his path.

“Eh?” Adept Vastriver suddenly came to a halt, sensing that powerful ripple.

“Such a powerful ripple...it must be an Immortal-ranked magic treasure.” Given that he had fragments of memories from his past life, some naturally involved Immortal-ranked magic treasures. Adept Vastriver’s eyes instantly turned red with desire, and he immediately transformed into a streak of light, hurrying forward.

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All of them, scattered throughout the palace, advanced at high speed towards the source of the ripples.

The Immortal-ranked magic treasure was within an extremely large and quiet secret room. The room was very large. The insides, however, were quite empty. The red-robed youth, Xue Hongyi, was currently staring, mouth hanging open, at a nearby oil lamp. Above the lamp, there was an azure, blazing flame. The area around the tiny lamp was filled with circles upon circles of flames, all of which emanated powerful ripples, forcibly preventing Xue Hongyi from reaching out to seize it.

“This, this...Immortal-ranked magic treasure?!” Xue Hongyi felt that this really was his lucky today. Just now, when he had entered, he had seen that to the side of the room, there was a seemingly ordinary decorative lamp. Only, a fire was blazing within the oil lamp, causing him to feel intrigued. What he had thought to himself was, “Given that Immortal Witchriver has died countless hundreds of millions of years ago, for this lamp to remain burning means that it must be extraordinary.”

He immediately had stretched his hand out to collect it into his storage-type magic treasure, but as he was about to do so, the lamp suddenly exploded with awe-inspiring might. Circles of fire blazed out from within

the lamp, emanating a powerful, rippling energy aura that easily deflected him.

“Hahaha, who says Ji Ning is the only lucky one around? I, Xue Hongyi, can be lucky as well. This Immortal-ranked magic artifact is mine.” Xue Hongyi was incomparably excited. He produced a horsetail whisk within his hand, then swept out with it. The white threads on the whisk immediately flew out, moving to surround the oil lamp.

The oil lamp remained where it was, but the flames around it began to blaze even greater, forcibly keeping the threads at bay.

“What?” A look of amazement appeared on Xue Hongyi’s face. “I can’t take it, even when I’m using a magic treasure?”

“A puny Wanxiang wants to be my master?” The flame atop the oil lamp suddenly transformed into the face of a child, which then stared angrily at Xue Hongyi. “You had best know your own limits and quickly depart.”

Xue Hongyi, however, only felt all the more delighted. According to the legends, Immortal-ranked magic treasures would give birth to treasure-spirits which could speak in the human tongue.

“It is as the legends say. They really are capable of human speech. An Immortal-ranked treasure!” Xue Hongyi’s eyes were shining. The entire Snowdragon Mountain was not in possession of a single Immortal-ranked magic treasure, but now, he had a chance to acquire one! A tremendous bit of luck had befallen him; it would be a sin to to anything besides seize it.

“Magic treasure, you had best obediently follow me.” A snowy white ribbon appeared in front of Xue Hongyi, the power of it clearly much greater than the previous treasure. This was one of Xue Hongyi’s most favored magic treasures, and it went sweeping in an entangling manner towards the lamp.

The lamp remained where it was. It was, after all, only an Immortal-ranked magic treasure; it wasn’t yet able to fly about and move about on its own. However, it was capable of manifesting a bit of its might...and

even just a small portion of the might of an Immortal-ranked magic treasure, was not something which an ordinary Wanxiang Adept could handle. The circles of fire around it began to grow even larger, and the ripples it manifested grew even stronger, managing to forcibly block Xue Hongyi's white ribbon.

"You aren't able to collect me. Your power is lacking, lacking by far." The blaze-turned-toddler face sneered, "You had best leave now. If someone who is weak acquires an Immortal-ranked magic treasure, it will only be a disaster, not a blessing."

"Hmph. I can take you and trade you for top-grade Heaven-ranked magic items and many other treasures. Alternately, I can go to the local Raindragon Guard branch and immediately enter secluded meditation, only leaving once I reach the Primal level...by then, my power will greatly expand, and Snowdragon Mountain will hold me in reverence." Xue Hongyi's eyes were filled with madness. "I refuse to believe I can't collect you, an inanimate object!"

Xue Hongyi used magic treasures repeatedly, attempting to capture it.

However, he simply could not.

He didn't dare use his own hand to snatch it; after all, he wasn't a Fiendgod Body Refiner. Upon doing so, he would probably be burnt to ash.

"Swoosh." Ripples of power suddenly came from outside, and the stone door began to be pushed open.

"Someone's coming in." Xue Hongyi could no longer afford to wait. "GET OVER HERE!" Xue Hongyi let out a howl, then executed a forbidden technique. His face turned completely red, and a series of flying needles flew out, exploding with power and transforming into a gigantic hand that grabbed the lamp, smothering and breaking the flames surrounding it.

"GET IN!" He immediately collected the Immortal-ranked magic treasure. Only now did Xue Hongyi turn his body, only to see that two figures had appeared from behind; Ji Ning and Yu Wei.

“Decisive and vicious,” Ning said softly. Xue Hongyi just grinned, seeming quite smug. At the critical moment, he had executed a forbidden technique and collected the Immortal-ranked magic treasure. He, too, felt that he had been quite decisive.

“Unfortunately, you were a step too late.” Xue Hongyi gave Ning a glance.

“That was an Azuresilk Godfire Lamp!” Yu Wei said softly, “It can be used to nourish skyfire and raise it to the first grade in power! In addition, the azuresilk godfire within it can be activated to attack enemies. It will pose a grave threat to even Loose Immortals, although it isn’t very effective against Celestial Immortals...still, it can be considered an excellent Immortal-ranked magic treasure. If it were to be sold to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, it could fetch a price of 1.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence!”

Ning’s heart shook. 1.5 million? And, according to what Yu Wei said, it seemed as though this Azuresilk Godfire Lamp was similar to the Earthfire Heartlamp in effect, capable of nourishing skyfire to the first grade! And it could also be used to fight against enemies...

Swoosh. Swoosh. Swoosh. A series of figures flew out; Ninelotus, Adept Vastriver, Northson, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing.

“The Immortal-ranked magic treasure? Where is it?” Northson hurriedly looked around, then stared at Xue Hongyi. “It wasn’t acquired by Xue Hongyi, was it?”

“It was him,” Yu Wei explained.

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In the largest hall within the Vault of Treasures.

Youngflame Nong was seated in the lotus position, continuously working to bind the hall. He, too, could sense the powerful ripples emanating from the Immortal-ranked magic treasure.

“There actually is an Immortal-ranked treasure?” Youngflame Nong said, surprised, “Was Immortal Witchriver so wealthy that he wouldn’t

keep all of his Immortal-ranked treasures by his side?”

Powerful experts would keep their most powerful artifacts by their side. A Celestial Immortal would generally have multiple Immortal-ranked magic treasures. Youngflame Nong had originally felt certain that the Witchriver Immortal Estate would have no Immortal-ranked magic treasures within, and so he didn't care about the treasures here at all.

“Young master, are you going to take action?” Xiangliu Fang asked.

“No need.” Youngflame Nong shook his head. “I have, after all, made a promise in the name of the clan. In addition, they will be needed within this Immortal estate.”

Xiangliu Fang nodded.

“Once they are no longer of use...” Youngflame Nong's eyes suddenly flickered with a bit of heat. “I have to say, that Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei...she really is quite fine.”

Xiangliu Fang laughed. He knew exactly what his master was thinking about.

“Young master, when the time comes, you just need to give a few subtle hints, and Yu Wei will know how she should act. She's merely a reincarnated Immortal; to Immortal cultivators, the most important thing is their cultivation paths. The pleasures of the flesh are, by comparison, a minor matter. For the sake of being able to proceed to greater heights on her path, she will yield to you, young master.” Xiangliu Fang spoke in a soft voice; his young master, in the imperial capital, was quite a lavish, generous spender.

He was the future Godplume Duke! Given his status, the types of pleasures he enjoyed were quite extravagant as well. It was actually quite common for reincarnated female Immortals to submit to being maidservants for him.

“Not the same. This Yu Wei isn't like the others; she's even better than those I had in the imperial capital.” Youngflame Nong licked his lower lip. “But as for that Ninelotus, heh heh...her demeanor and aura is quite

extraordinary as well. People from large, top-tier clans like her know how to judge a situation. I imagine that it would be a bit easier to convince her to play with me a few times. Yu Wei will probably be harder.”

“How about...” Xiangliu Fang’s voice grew even softer.

“No need. I still need them.” Youngflame Nong shook his head. “Some matters are more important than others.”

“Right.” Xiangliu Fang nodded.



# Chapter 13: The Humble Xue Hongyi

Within the private room. Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Yu Wei, Ninelotus, Adept Vastriver, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing were all staring towards Xue Hongyi.

The allure of an Immortal-ranked magic artifact was incomparably great. Although Adept Vastriver had been a Loose Immortal in his past life, he had never acquired an Immortal-ranked magic treasure...for the sake of such a treasure, even the annihilation of entire clans and sects was not uncommon.

“Why don’t we kill them, then take the Immortal-ranked magic treasure to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain and trade it for liquefied elemental essence? We can split it evenly,” Adept Vastriver sent mentally, a hint of coldness in his eyes.

“Kill?”

“Should we kill?”

They were all hesitating, but the most determined one was Adept Vastriver.

Ning and Xue Hongyi weren’t exactly on good terms; in the past, Xue Hongyi had even intended to try and capture Ning. Fortunately, Northmont Baiwei had stopped him. Ning didn’t feel any compunctions against killing Xue Hongyi...but they had entered this Immortal estate together. And, when they had done so, Youngflame Nong had already given them a strongly worded warning.

“What are you planning on doing?” Xue Hongyi shouted, “Previously, when we arrived at this Witchriver Immortal Estate, young master Youngflame said on the warship that we were forbidden from fighting against each other!”

Xue Hongyi was mentally panicking as well. Although Youngflame Nong had issued this warning, the reality was that at this point in time, these five disciples of the Black-White College were definitely more

important to Youngflame Nong than Xue Hongyi was. If they really were to kill Xue Hongyi, most likely Youngflame Nong wouldn't be too upset about it.

Ning and the others all exchanged glances.

Previously, Youngflame Nong had said these words: "After we enter the Witchriver Immortal Estate, we have to be of one mind and work together. We cannot fight internally. If anyone causes chaos inside, then don't blame me, Youngflame Nong, for becoming cruel and unfeeling."

"What is there to fear? We five disciples of the Black-White College are more important to Youngflame Nong," Adept Vastriver sent mentally. "After we kill Xue Hongyi, Youngflame Nong definitely wouldn't act against us; that would be like breaking his own arms."

"He won't act against us now, but after he binds this Immortal estate, we won't be of use to him and he'll be able to act against us," Ninelotus sent.

"Act against us? We aren't so easily dealt with. What's more, you, Ninelotus, are the next leader of the Dongyan clan. Youngflame Nong won't dare to act too rashly; after all, he's currently just an ordinary disciple of the Youngflame clan who has a high chance of becoming the next Godplume Duke; he's not the actual Godplume Duke yet. If he dares to act against you...his inheritance might actually be seized and stolen by another," Adept Vastriver said.

"He won't act against senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus, but he would act against us," Yu Wei sent mentally. "If we don't kill Xue Hongyi, then he won't have an excuse to attack us, because he previously gave us a promise. But once we actually kill Xue Hongyi, then we'll have given him an excuse."

Whether or not an excuse was created was of great importance.

In all matters, one needed to occupy the moral high ground. After all, behind Ning and the others were powerful forces such as the Black-White College and the Dongyan clan. If Ning and the others were extremely weak and without much influence, then simply killing them might not

matter. But because they did have backgrounds...in all matters , there was a need to occupy the moral high ground before dealing with them!

“We cannot give him an excuse. After all, that Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, is far more powerful than us,” Yu Wei said. “As for Xue Hongyi...after we leave, we can find another chance to get rid of him.”

“I agree with senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei.” Ning expressed his opinion mentally as well.

Adept Vastriver frowned. Of the five of them, himself, Ning, and Yu Wei were the most powerful. With Ning and Yu Wei disagreeing...while Vastriver was capable of defeating Xue Hongyi, he wasn't certain of being able to kill him.

“Hmph.” Adept Vastriver turned his head and left. Ning and the others exchanged a glance, then all left as well. The only one left in the room was Xue Hongyi, who finally let out a sigh of relief.

“In the end, I was able to rely on Youngflame Nong to scare them off,” Xue Hongyi mused to himself. “After we leave the Witchriver Immortal Estate, I need to immediately stick very close to young master Youngflame, and then find a chance to use a Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal and flee.”

He understood that successfully escaping might be difficult. But he had to take the risk; for the sake of this Immortal-ranked magic treasure, he had to!

In fact, he didn't even dare trust the three Primal Daoists of Snowdragon Mountain. In the Immortal path, it was not rare for disciples to kill their masters and ancestors, and it was even more common for masters to kill disciples. For the sake of acquiring an Immortal-ranked magic treasure... anything might happen.

Ning and the others all spread out, once more continuing to search through the palace for treasures. After all, this was the Vault of Treasures of a Celestial Immortal; any random treasure would be worth more than the entire holdings of an ordinary Wanxiang Adept.

They carefully searched for another hour. Each of them had completely searched the entire palace. They all believed that it might be possible that the others might have missed searching a spot.

“I’m finished. Master, I don’t have anything, not even a single magic treasure.” The distant Little Qing was chatting mentally with Ning.

“Not a single magic treasure? That’s so sad!” Ning teased.

“Ask Uncle White and see if he found any treasures,” Little Qing sent back through their spirit-link.

“Alright, I’ll ask.” Ning sent spiritually to the Whitewater Hound, “Uncle White, have you finished your search?”

“I’m finished.” The Whitewater Hound’s mental voice seemed quite delighted. “My luck wasn’t bad. I discovered a corpse, which had a magic robe and some other treasures near it. I don’t know if it was left behind by a Loose Immortal or a Primal Diremonsters, but all the treasures are excellent. I’m not able to bind them; they should be Heaven-ranked magic treasures.”

Ning was instantly delighted.

This Vault of Treasures actually could be said to be the most important of the five palaces. It had the most treasures, and thus it was normally guarded by monstrous experts that were at least at the Primal or Loose Immortal levels.

Even Loose Immortals generally wouldn’t have access to an Immortal-ranked magic treasure, and so it was quite hard to judge from magic treasures alone if they were left behind by a Loose Immortal or a Primal Diremonster. Only after binding the storage items and seeing how many treasures were inside it would one know.

“Master, Master, how did Uncle White do? Did he also find nothing?” Little Qing sent spiritually.

“Uncle White’s luck was better than yours; he acquired the treasures from a skeletal corpse.”

“A corpse? His luck was actually better than mine? I’m an Azure Skyserpent; it’s as easy for me to encounter a stroke of luck as it is to eat rice. I’m surrounded by good fortune...but his luck was better than mine? Master, what about you? Did you find any treasures?”

“I acquired...even more than Uncle White,” Ning replied.

“Even more?! How can this be?!”

.....

Within the largest hall in the palace. Youngflame Nong remained seated in the lotus position on the jade bed, continuing to bind it, while Xiangliu Fang stood to one side. Ning and the others had all regrouped here together.

“This is the Vault of Treasures. It should be the place within the Witchriver Immortal Estate which was meant for the storage of treasures, and the place with the most treasures. By the looks of it, you have all gained quite a bit.” Youngflame Nong sat above them, smiling. “And just now, I could sense some ripples; it should have been an Immortal-ranked magic treasure emerging. I wonder which of you was so lucky as to acquire the Immortal-ranked treasure.”

Ji Ning and the others all turned their heads, looking towards Xue Hongyi in unison. Xue Hongyi was stunned.

“Oh, so it was you, Xue Hongyi?” Youngflame Nong raised an eyebrow. Earlier, when trapped within the formation, Xue Hongyi had hid far away and abandoned Youngflame Nong. This caused Youngflame Nong to feel ill-will towards him.

“Young master Youngflame, I am willing to offer this Immortal-ranked magic treasure to you,” Xue Hongyi said hurriedly. Against Ji Ning’s group, he was willing to threaten them and struggle against them, but young master Youngflame was simply too powerful. In terms of both background and political power, Youngflame Nong could completely crush him. In terms of personal power, that Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, could probably annihilate him with one blow.

Ning and the others all looked over with surprise. Offering it to young master Youngflame?

“Treasures should go to the worthy!” Xue Hongyi said hurriedly. “I, Xue Hongyi, acknowledge that I am lacking in worthiness; a treasure like this, to me, is a disaster, not a blessing. It is better for me to offer it to you, young master Youngflame. It is only natural and reasonable that someone as exalted as you, young master Youngflame, be the possessor of this treasure.”

Youngflame Nong laughed.

He liked those who knew how to flatter, especially when the flatterer was a fairly powerful genius. Ji Ning and the others were from the Black-White College; all of them were proud by nature, and there was no way they could debase themselves to flatter in this way. Xue Hongyi, however, had lowered his head and bent his waist, truly humbling himself.

“I’ve already promised, in the name of my Youngflame clan, that the treasures you acquire will belong to you. I absolutely will not fight with you for them, or ask you to offer them,” Youngflame Nong said.

“This isn’t fighting with me, nor is it asking me to offer it up...this is a normal trade,” Xue Hongyi said hurriedly. “This Immortal-ranked magic treasure, the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp, isn’t very useful to me. I’m willing to trade it to you, young master Youngflame, for some other treasures. You can just give me some random Heaven-ranked magic treasures and it would suffice.”

“You are over-thinking things.” Youngflame Nong shook his head. “No matter what, I will not accept this Immortal-ranked magic treasure.”

Only now did Xue Hongyi let out a mental sigh of relief. He had proactively offered the treasure, but young master Youngflame had declined. Now, he was calm.

“Xue Hongyi is quite the clever fellow,” Youngflame Nong mused secretly to himself. “I can’t accept it now. If I did, the hearts of Ji Ning and his group would turn cold! They are still very useful to me. After I bind the immortal estate...at that point, I can have Xue Hongyi offer it to

me again. If necessary, I can just bestow a few treasures upon him in exchange.”

After two full hours later, Youngflame Nong finally completed binding the jade bed.

“Haha, the binding is finally complete.” Youngflame Nong walked down from the jade bed, a smile on his face.

“Young master,” the nearby Xiangliu Fang said with a frown, “Right now, the two most powerful monstrous forces in the entire Immortal estate world are waiting outside. As soon as we emerge, we will most likely suffer their immediate attack.

“The two most powerful monstrous forces?” Ning and the others were all startled. The titanic wave formed from more than ten thousand Dao-soldiers, and the giant Yaksha Dao-soldier formation formed by the Witchriver clan? Those were capable of completely suppressing even the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang; he had been forced to rely on his astonishing recuperative abilities and evasive techniques in order to escape with his life. He hadn’t been able to fight back at all.

“I can stay alive, but I am not confident in being able to protect the young master.” This was Xiangliu Fang’s worry.

“Oh?” Youngflame Nong frowned slightly. “You say they are waiting outside?”

“Right. They’ve been waiting outside the entire time,” Xiangliu Fang growled. “They’ve been trapped for countless years within this Immortal estate world; every generation has always dreamed of leaving and going to the vast Grand Xia Empire. Thus, they will definitely stop at nothing and be willing to pay any price in order to seize the key to the Immortal estate you hold, young master.”

Youngflame Nong nodded. He could understand the powerful desire and urge these two monstrous forces had to leave. It was a desire to see the greater world, a desire that would lead them to use all their might in acting against Youngflame Nong.

“This will be trouble.” Youngflame Nong gritted his teeth. Ning and the others all stood there, racking their brains. What to do?



# Chapter 14: The Immortal Grass Palace

“How strong are the Dao-soldiers of the monsters in this Immortal estate world?” Youngflame Nong frowned.

He understood that the biggest obstacles to him binding this Immortal estate were the local monster races present. They had all been trapped in this tiny world for far too long; every generation dreamed of leaving. This sort of powerful desire was something which would cause them to be willing to sacrifice anything. The worst thing was, these monstrous Dao-soldiers were all extremely powerful.

“The two most powerful forces are the Titanwave Dao-soldier formation and the Yaksha Dao-soldier formation,” Xiangliu Fang said. “These two forces both have more than ten thousand Dao-soldiers, and the leaders of each are at the Earth Immortal or Loose Immortal level.”

“Both are at the Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal level?” Youngflame Nong was surprised.

“Right. They each should have one,” Xiangliu Fang said. “The Titanwave Dao-soldier formation’s leader should be a bit stronger. As for the Yaksha Dao-soldier formation’s leader, although their Immortal is a bit weaker, as a whole, they are stronger...against these two forces, even the most supreme of Loose Immortals would be beaten so badly they would have no choice but to flee!”

Xiangliu Fang was a true, primordial Fiendgod, and one of the Hydraga race at that. Although he was at the peak Primal level, he was comparable to a supreme Loose Immortal in actual combat power.

The slightly weaker Titanwave Dao-soldier formation was already powerful enough to force Xiangliu Fang into constant flight. The Yaksha Dao-soldier formation was also able to dominate Xiangliu Fang with ease.

“It isn’t too likely that we would be able to defeat them.” Xiangliu Fang shook his head. “Even if a few extra Loose Immortals came, it would be far from being enough.”

“The Immortal estate has five palaces in total,” Youngflame Nong said in a low voice. “Right now, I’ve bound one of them. I’m confident in being able to move to the other two palaces, but the final two will be troublesome.”

“Young master Youngflame, you are confident in being able to go to two palaces?” Mu Northson said with surprise, “Since you can go to two, why can’t you go to all four?”

Ning and the others all looked towards Youngflame Nong, confused. The two monstrous forces were waiting outside; how were they supposed to charge past them?

“You don’t understand,” Youngflame Nong said with a laugh, “I’ve already bound this Vault of Treasures. This palace is extremely large, one of the five main pillars of the entire Immortal estate world, capable of affecting an area of ten thousand kilometers around it. By relying on the key to the Immortal estate, I can open a corridor, allowing us to exit this palace at any location within ten thousand kilometers of this palace.”

“If these two monstrous forces choose to just wait close nearby, then I can move us to a location thousands of kilometers away from them. Afterwards, by relying on Uncle Fang’s evasive techniques, we can hurry towards the next palace.”

Ning and the others now understood.

“After I bind all five palaces, I can appear in any location within this Immortal estate world!” Youngflame Nong sighed, “But right now, I’ve only bound one.”

“Young master Youngflame, by using this ability,” Xue Hongyi said with astonished delight, “Can’t you just go into all four of the palaces? There’s no way these monstrous forces can possibly prevent us from entering.”

“You are wrong.” Youngflame Nong shook his head and sighed. “They have been sealed within this Immortal estate world for too long, and so they’ve forgotten about the power of the palaces. But once I use the palace to move us to a location thousands of kilometers away...as soon as I use this technique, they’ll know that it is possible for us to do this. By

then, they will probably go and guard the palaces which I have yet to bind.”

The looks on everyone’s faces grew solemn. Right! Five major palaces... there was no need for the monstrous forces to wait for them outside. They could just go and completely surround and guard the palaces that had yet to be bound! For the sake of binding the Immortal estate, Youngflame Nong would still have to charge towards them, even though he knew that the unbound palaces were now surrounded in rings of protection.

“Lying in wait to catch the hare!” Ning murmured this saying to himself. “The unbound palaces...Youngflame Nong has to go there. As long as they surround the unbound palaces with layers of protection, then...there will be no way for us to avoid them.”

Lying in wait to catch the hare was a seemingly clumsy technique. But this technique was aimed at their weak point; Ning’s group would have no other options other than to fall into the trap.

“Well, there’s nothing we can do. Let’s first go bind two of the palaces,” Youngflame Nong said. “Let’s go!”

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In the area around the pillar of light which represented the Vault of Treasures. The two most powerful monstrous forces of this world were gathered here. The Titanwave Dao-soldier formation and the Yaksha Dao-soldier formation were both present.

“Duohe, this time, the two of us should set aside our differences and work together to deal with the humans and seize the key to the Immortal estate.”

“Witchsui, if your Witchriver clan is willing to join forces, I naturally will be delighted to comply.”

These were the two most powerful figures of the entire Immortal estate world. One was an old Loose Immortal, Immortal Duohe, who had lived for more than a hundred thousand years. The other was Immortal Witchsui, who had only lived for ten thousand years. The two of them

immediately swore an oath to the Dao of the Heavens to join forces on this day.

For the sake of being able to leave, they would be willing to sacrifice anything.

The two sides continued to wait quietly. A long time later...

“Eh?” The two Loose Immortals, as well as some Primal Diremonsters, simultaneously turned their heads to stare thousands of kilometers away. There, a warship suddenly appeared out of nowhere. And then, aboard the warship, Xiangliu Fang’s body suddenly blurred, transforming into an enormous Fiendgod that was three thousand meters tall, with the lower body of a serpent and nine heads. The Fiendgod Hydraclutched the warship in his claws, then used an evasive technique, fleeing at an utterly astonishing speed.

Swoosh!

He left behind only a streak of light in the air. This caused both Immortal Duohe and the Witchriver clan to be flabbergasted. They knew very well that in terms of speed, they couldn’t possibly catch up with that Fiendgod. Since they had already started at a distance of thousands of kilometers...there was no hope at all.

“How could this be? How could they have suddenly appeared thousands of kilometers away?”

“When they had entered the palace, they had all been very close to it.”

“They had to be very close to enter...why were they able to leave at a distance of thousands of kilometers?”

Even countless years ago, when Immortal Witchriver was still alive and the master of this place, his clansmen didn’t fully understand the special powers of these palaces. And now that countless years had passed? How could these monsters possibly understand them?

“They must have bound the palace. The palace is under their control, which is why they were able to do something so unique,” Immortal Duohe said.

“That has to be the case,” Immortal Witchsui agreed.

“The Immortal estate has five palaces in total. They’ve only bound one. There are four which remain unbound. Let us each guard one of the unbound palaces; unless they give up their quest, they will have to fight us head on,” Immortal Duohe said.

The two sides quickly agreed on a plan, and they howled through the air as they flew at high speed towards two of the distant golden Skypillars of light.

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“The worst case scenario has already come to pass.” The nine-headed, serpent-bodied Hydra was still clutching the warship. Within the warship, Youngflame Nong, Ji Ning, and the others were watching those two distant monstrous powers begin to move. They hadn’t moved to pursue or attack; rather, they had flown off into two different directions, towards two of those golden Skypillars of light.

“I have to bind this Immortal estate.” Youngflame Nong gritted his teeth. “These monsters...damn them. Damn them!”

Soon, the enormous Hydra Fiendgod, warship in one hand, had arrived at one of the other golden Skypillars of light.

“Go in.” Youngflame Nong activated the key to the Immortal estate, opening up a corridor.

Ji Ning and the others all felt a certain somberness. They were able to easily enter this time, but that was only because there were no monsters blocking them. Two of the five palaces, however, were now under heavy guard; how could those two palaces be so easily traversed?

Whoosh.

The Hydra shrank himself, once more entering the warship, and the entire warship flew into the opened tunnel.

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An incomparably massive hall, so large that it was more than a

thousand times larger than the first hall they had entered in the Vault of Treasures.

“It’s so big.” Ning’s group was completely amazed. Looking at this world felt like looking at an entire continent.

This utterly massive hall actually really was a miniature sealed world. In the skies above it, a ‘sun’ was blazing with endless light and heat. In the earth below, there were countless types of spirit-grass and spirit-fruit that were growing. During the passage of countless years, the Immortal grass here had been taken care of by some constructs, but hadn’t truly been nourished properly.

These types of spirit-grass and spirit-fruit generally needed many unique treasures in order to grow properly. Still, despite that, after the passage of countless years, some truly rare and precious specimens of spirit-grass and spirit-fruit had appeared.

“Immortal grass and Immortal fruit!” Ning and the others were overjoyed.

WHOOSH!

Suddenly, the Fiendgod Hydra by Youngflame Nong’s side stretched his hands out. His hands quickly increased in size as his fingers transformed into ten giant snakes, covering the skies as they swept out towards the entire region of Immortal grass. In a twinkling, the eighteen types of Immortal grass and spirit-fruit with the densest elemental auras were all plucked clean.

“Growl...damn you.”

“This is the Master’s Immortal Grass Palace. You dared to steal his Immortal grass...damn you.”

Three golems came flying out.

The Fiendgod Hydra sent one of his giant hands outwards in a backhanded blow. The three golems were instantly sent flying away, smashing against the distant walls. And then, Xiangliu Fang sent out another hand to grab them, tossing the three Primal-level golems into his

own large sack.

Only then did Xiangliu Fang come to a stop, standing there calmly by Youngflame Nong's side, as though nothing had happened.

“Uhh....”

Ning and the others stared towards the Fiendgod Hydraga in astonishment. There was no way they could compete against Xiangliu Fang, when he chose to act.

“The treasures will go to whoever obtains them. I said these words earlier. Since Uncle Fang obtained them, those things will go to Uncle Fang,” Youngflame Nong laughed. “There is still quite a bit of spirit-fruit and spirit-grass remaining. Although their medicinal value is a bit lower, they still are very good.”

Ning and the others couldn't help but curse in secret.

This medicinal garden left behind by Immortal Witchriver, despite the passage of countless years, had never received the top-tier treatment it deserved. The ‘large fish ate the small fish, and the small fish ate the shrimp’; as a result, eighteen truly Immortal-grade spirit-fruit and spirit-grass had emerged. All of the other remaining Immortal grass and Immortal fruit had had much of their spiritual energy stolen by those eighteen. Although all of them were unhappy, Ji Ning and the others, including Xue Hongyi, still hurriedly went to collect all of the Immortal grass and Immortal fruit remaining.

“The Immortal Grass Palace is an empty place; there are barely any rooms here.” Youngflame Ning quickly discovered the core of this palace; it was a quite, secluded little room built right next to the Immortal grass garden. The entire room was the core of this palace.

“The rest of you can do some sightseeing outside. You might find some treasures.” Youngflame Nong calmly entered the room, beginning to bind it.

Ning and the others cursed in secret. Immortal Grass Palace, Immortal Grass Palace ...from the name alone, one could tell that the treasures

within consisted of Immortal grass. The Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, had already taken the most valuable specimens for himself; what other treasures could they possibly find?

Despite that, Ning and the others still separated and began a quick search. Unfortunately, this Immortal Grass Palace didn't have so much as a single skeleton within it. It made sense; this was Immortal Witchriver's personal medicinal garden. He trusted his own constructs above all, and thus forbade any of his clansmen from entering this palace.

Two hours later.

"I've already bound the Immortal Grass Palace," Youngflame Nong laughed. "Come. Let us go to the next palace."



# Chapter 15: The Desire of the Monstrous Cultivators

Within the Immortal estate world.

The three thousand meter tall Hydraga Fiendgod, warship in hand, once more used his evasive techniques to move towards a third palace.

“These local monsters...” Youngflame Nong stared coldly into the distance. Of the five Skypillars of golden light, two of them were tightly surrounded by dense clusters of Dao-soldiers. “After I bind this Immortal estate, I am definitely going to summon the clan’s army and enslave all of these local monsters. They will forever serve our Youngflame clan in battle.”

The local monsters of this Immortal estate were all exceptionally powerful. Even after binding the Immortal estate, Youngflame Nong wouldn’t be able to do anything to these powerful monsters. Still, behind him, there was the even more powerful Youngflame clan.

“Senior apprentice-brother, what method do you think young master Youngflame will use in order to bind the final two palaces? It seems quite difficult to me. The monsters present really are a bit too powerful,” Mu Northson sent mentally.

“Don’t underestimate Youngflame Nong. He is one of the ‘Four Dukelings’ of the imperial capital; since he has dared to come accept this trial, he definitely has many things up his sleeve,” Ji Ning sent back.

Swoosh! Soon, Ning’s group entered a new palace.

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In the midst of the sky-covering Titanwave Dao-soldier formation. The leader was a silver-haired, feather-robed, middle-aged man. His eyes flashed with electricity, and his bearing was graceful and leisurely. He was the the most powerful and longest living figure within this Immortal estate world; Immortal Duohe.

“Everyone, the moment has come for the destinies of all of us within this world to be changed. I won’t try to invade or to assimilate you.” Immortal Duohe stared into the distance. Right in front of him, there was another massive wave. This was a wave formed from one of the lesser monstrous powers of this world; all of the weaker monsters had been invited to come over as well.

The Immortal estate world was simply too small; it was very easy for them to gather together.

“I can even swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens that I am willing to enter an alliance with you to work together against that Fiendgod and those humans,” Immortal Duohe said. “We have to acquire that key. As long as we can acquire the key...all of us who live within this Immortal estate world can leave and go to the wider world.”

“Immortal Duohe, you might not act against us, but what about the Witchriver clan?”

“Don’t worry. Witchsui and I have already sworn an oath to the Dao of the Heavens. At a moment like this, why should we engage in internecine strife?”

The decision came very quickly.

This was because all of the monsters present shared the same goal - to go to the greater world outside. Since they were all sincere in their desires and had no wish to squabble, the leaders naturally decided to swear oaths to the Dao of the Heavens.

Although these loose, scattered powers were seemingly small and weak, if one added them all up, they were definitely not any weaker than the ten thousand-plus Dao-soldiers which Immortal Duohe himself commanded.

“Witchsui, your Witchriver clan is a bit stronger than my forces. Let these monsters stay with me and stand on guard here,” Immortal Duohe said.

“That’s fine.”

The proud Witchriver clan disdained from allying with the other

monsters. With a teleport, Immortal Witchsui once more departed, returning to his own Yaksha Dao-soldier formation.

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Ning and the others had no idea at all that the monsters outside had finally accomplished a miracle which had not been seen in all the countless years after Immortal Witchriver's death...absolute unity!

The Dao-soldiers which Immortal Witchriver had left behind consisted of two types; the 'Seawave Dao-soldiers' and the 'Yaksha Dao-soldiers'. The Seawave Dao-armors were extremely numerous. As for the more elite Yaksha Dao-armors, he had left them to his own Witchriver clan.

Now, under Immortal Duohe's command, all of the Seawave Dao-soldiers had been gathered in one place, forming a power that was no weaker than the Yaksha Dao-soldier formation! These Seawave Dao-soldiers tightly surrounded one golden Skypillar of light, while the other Yaksha Dao-soldiers tightly surrounded the other one.

"Swoosh."

Ning's group flew into the palace. This was an extremely large hall, almost identical to the Immortal Grass Palace. Within the hall were many, many corpses.

"Those are Dao-soldier armors."

"Dao-soldier armors!"

Ning's group, upon entering, was immediately stunned by the many corpses on the ground. And then, they noticed those Dao-armors.

BOOM! The Fiendgod Hydra once more stretched out his two massive hands. With inexorable power, he snatched up the the magic treasures around two corpses that were covered with Dao-armors that were nearly translucent and which glowed with black light. These two Dao-armors both emanated incredibly powerful ripples; although they were inferior to Immortal-ranked magic treasures, they vastly surpassed the other Dao-armors.

After collecting these two Dao-armors and sets of magic treasures, the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, once more returned to stand on the warship next to Youngflame Nong, acting as though nothing had happened.

“This guy...”

Ning’s group was completely helpless.

They had no time to waste for words. All of them transformed into streaks of light, beginning to frantically collect the treasures lying on the ground. The entire, massive hall had to have at least hundreds of skeletons littering it, all of which were covered by Dao-armors. These Dao-armors varied in strength; some were suitable for the Zifu level, some were suitable for the Wanxiang level, and some were even suitable for Primals.

“Those two that glowed with black light were probably meant for Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals to wear,” Ning and the others mused silently to themselves.

Soon, Ning’s group had completely swept through this entire hall.

This palace didn’t have any private rooms; it was just a massive, empty palace.

Swish. The Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, pointed off into the distance. A black surge of divine power landed on the distant walls of the palace, and three characters instantly appeared on the wall - DAO SOLDIER PALACE.

“This is the Dao Soldier Palace,” Youngflame Nong laughed. “However, Immortal Witchriver had too many Dao-soldiers, so most remained in the outside world. Only a small number of them remained in here...just now, the two Dao-armors which Uncle Fang collected can only be considered top-grade Heaven-ranked treasures; they are far from being at the level of Immortal-ranked treasures. If they were Immortal-ranked treasures, then they probably would have manifested treasure-spirits.”

Ning and the others understood that Youngflame Nong was trying to console them.

Within the wide palace, there were also a series of extremely large

pillars. One of them, covered in decorative carvings of a divine, coiling dragon, was the core of this palace. Youngflame Nong thus sat down in the lotus position in front of the pillar, beginning to bind it.

Ning and the others could do nothing but wait patiently to one side.

“Senior apprentice-brother, that’s amazing,” Northson said, seated next to Ning. He chortled, “Just now, each of us only managed to acquire a few of the treasures from those hundreds of Dao-soldier corpses, but you, senior apprentice-brother...with two spirit-beasts helping you, it was as though there were three of you scavenging at the same time. And that Azure Skysnake in particular...with a blink, she moved from corpse to corpse at astonishing speed.”

Earlier, it had primarily been Ji Ning’s group, Xue Hongyi, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing who had been scavenging the corpses. Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing had thus made up three of the eight scavengers!

“Hmph. He ended up with the most Dao-armors as well. Still, I acquired an Immortal-ranked magic treasure; it’s even better than a thousand or ten thousand Dao-armors.” The nearby Xue Hongyi mused silently to himself, but he didn’t dare to say anything aloud.

“Right, right. Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, after we go to the next palace, you need to take it easy,” Adept Vastriver laughed.

“Him? Take it easy?” Yu Wei laughed as well.

“It is your own fault for not having spirit-beasts.” Ninelotus spoke up in Ning’s defense.

Adept Vastriver sighed, “Everyone wants good spirit-beasts. If, for example, a Redscale Salamander was willing to submit to me, of course I would accept it. Unfortunately, there’s no way I can even get close to that sort of Godbeast; as soon as the mere hint of one appears, supremely powerful clans like the Youngflame clan will immediately capture it. Even your Azure Skysnake, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning...Azure Skysnakes are extremely skilled at finding treasures and fortuitous legacies. They are extremely rare and hard to find; to take in one as a spirit-beast is quite

hard as well.”

“Azure Skysnake, come, take me as your master,” Northson called out.

“Woody, you blockhead, you think you are worthy of being my master?” Little Qing, coiled around Ning’s arm, raised her serpentine head and spoke out in the human tongue, clearly filled with disdain.

“You, you Azure Skysnake, I’m still your master’s brother, you know!” Northson stared at him.

“I only acknowledge my master. You? Go sit in the corner somewhere,” Little Qing said with tremendous arrogance.

“You...!” Northson, utterly infuriated, was only able to let out a snort. “You know what? I’m not going to squabble with a little snake like you.”

He had never been able to win a verbal victory over Little Qing.

Ning, watching this, began to laugh. Actually, the likes of Yu Wei and Adept Vastriver, both reincarnated Immortals, trained at extremely rapid rates. Thus, they generally would not acquire spirit-beasts, because their spirit-beasts wouldn’t possibly be able to keep up with them! As for some truly powerful Godbeasts...they weren’t so easily acquired.

For example, the Redscale Salamander; everyone wanted them, but they weren’t so easily acquired.

Although the Azure Skysnake was a bit weaker in power, it was still extremely talented in seeking out fortuitous legacies and treasures; generally speaking, Immortal cultivators would all be willing to tame one. Unfortunately, they were too rare, and also very skilled in escape.

As for Whitewater Hounds? By comparison, they were actually a bit inferior. Their strengths mainly lay in their intelligence and their comprehensive abilities. Still, to Ning, the Whitewater Hound was his Uncle White, like a parent or an elder in the family. He had also once saved both Ning and Ning’s mother, and had always quietly supported Ning in his endeavors.

Still, it had to be said that Uncle White was indeed quite accomplished

in the art of formations; he had been the main problem-solver in the Vault of Treasures.

.....

Youngflame Nong rose to his feet. He had already bound the core of this palace, but there wasn't a hint of joy on his face. Ning and the others weren't smiling either.

This was because...they had now completely bound three of the palaces; the Vault of Treasures, the Immortal Grass Palace, and the Dao Soldier Palace. Two more palaces remained...and one was under heavy guard by the Yaksha Dao-soldiers, while the other was under heavy guard by the Seawave Dao-soldiers. If they wanted to enter, they would have to fight. There would be no way to avoid them!

Those terrifying monstrous Dao-soldiers were so powerful that they had beaten even a Fiendgod like Xiangliu Fang into a constant retreat. If Ning and the others were to engage them in battle, they would probably be effortlessly slaughtered!

Compared to Xiangliu Fang, they were in a position of extreme weakness, to say nothing of those Dao-soldiers.

The threat of imminent death...it caused all of them to have ugly looks on their faces.

"Everyone." Youngflame Nong swept Ning and the others with his gaze. "I have the key to the estate, and can open a corridor to leave from any location within this Immortal estate. If we truly encounter a great danger that we simply cannot withstand...I'll lead you all in fleeing this Immortal estate. Don't worry; I'm still confident in my abilities to escape."

"However, everyone, you need to be very careful; I don't wish for any of you to end up being killed by the monsters," Youngflame Nong said.

Ning and the others all understood that there was no way out now.

However, none of them had thought that challenging a Celestial Immortal's estate would be an easy task. Danger was expected and normal. Ning and the others all had their own life-saving measures, none

of which had been used yet.

“Very good. Let’s head out,” Youngflame Nong ordered.

.....

All of the monsters of this Immortal estate world had been divided into two forces. One was the Witchriver clan’s Yaksha Dao-soldiers, while the other was the Seawave Dao-soldiers. They were each guarding one of the palaces.

In air, far away, a large warship suddenly appeared. Waves of energy rippled out from it as it cruised forward, flying through the air at high speed and heading directly towards the Seawave Dao-soldiers, led by Immortal Duohe.

“They are coming.”

“That Fiendgod and those humans are coming.”

“Duohe, it’s up to you,” Immortal Witchsui sent mentally from far away.

Immortal Duohe had more than twenty thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers under his command. They formed into an incomparably titanic wave that covered the skies, and all of them stared coldly towards the large warship flying towards them.



# Chapter 16: The Wildcore

Aboard the warship.

Ji Ning and the others stared at the massive, distant wave, and the savage, sky-filling aura the wave emanated. All of them had heavy feelings in their hearts.

“These monsters...after I bind the Immortal estate, I am going to enslave all of them. All of them!” Youngflame Nong stared at the distant monsters, his face turning savage. He also gritted his teeth, then produced in his hand a queer contraption that was the size of a person’s head. Extraordinarily powerful ripples emerged from it.

Ning and the others couldn’t help but look at this item.

“A Wildcore?” Mu Northson called out in surprise.

Ning and the others, including Adept Vastriver, Ninelotus, and Xue Hongyi, all had puzzled looks on their faces. Clearly, they had no idea what this was.

“You actually know about Wildcores?” Youngflame Nong nodded. “Right. This is a Wildcore! An Immortal-grade Wildcore.”

“But your construct-warship is only at the Heaven-rank. If you put this Immortal-grade Wildcore into this construct-warship, it won’t be able to withstand the power. Even if it looks perfectly fine from the outside, the formation diagrams inside it will begin to crumble. Your construct-warship will be doomed.” Northson couldn’t help but voice his concerns.

“It will be able to hold for a short period of time, the time needed to boil a kettle of tea,” Youngflame Nong said calmly. He then immediately pressed the head-sized Wildcore towards the planks of the warship.

Whoosh.

A dark corridor naturally appeared in the floorboards of the warship, and the Wildcore burrowed within.

“For at least that period of time, this warship of mine will be able to

reach a level that approaches the Immortal-rank. Perhaps it wouldn't be able to withstand the attacks of Celestial Immortals, but these monstrous Dao-soldiers won't be able to break my warship," Youngflame Nong said in a low voice.

"What's a Wildcore?"

"Junior apprentice-brother, what sort of a thing is this Desolate Heart?"

Ning and the others, puzzled, all sent mental messages to Northson.

Northson was extremely skilled in the Dao of Constructs, and he also understood Wildcores very well. He immediately sent back, "It's quite complicated, but to simplify it...Wildcores are, in reality, meant to be used for Immortal-ranked construct-warships, allowing them to temporarily explode with power. Immortal-ranked construct-warships are able to withstand this sort of sudden increase in power...but Immortal-ranked warships are far more valuable than even ordinary Immortal-ranked magic treasures. Even young master Youngflame most likely doesn't possess this sort of warship."

"Thus, Youngflame Nong is placing his Wildcore into the warship he is using. His warship is actually very good as well; it is Heaven-ranked, and a very precious one. But the power of a Wildcore is simply too great, and this Heaven-ranked construct-warship cannot endure it. Even though its own 'body', being a magic treasure, won't be damaged, the formations and diagrams within it will begin to crumble," Northson said.

Although Ning and the others understood little of this craft, they understood the importance of formation-diagrams.

The formation-diagrams of a construct served as their core; they were what made the constructs work properly! It was precisely because of the existence of formation-diagrams that constructs were able to possess sentience and unleash powerful, precise attacks. Once the formation-diagrams crumbled, the entire construct would be finished.

"One warship, one Wildcore," Youngflame Nong growled. "We have to enter this palace. We have to!"

Ning and the others exchanged glances. They could all sense Youngflame Nong's resolve.

.....

The warship steadily moved forward. Immortal Duohe, in command of more than twenty thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers, stared coldly as it approached.

"Kill."

"Kill that Fiendgod. Kill those humans."

These monstrous Dao-soldiers were all eager and impatient. However, without Immortal Duohe's order, nobody dared to attack rashly.

Finally...

The seemingly placid and calm warship, that had been advancing at an ordinary speed, suddenly began to glow with an dazzlingly brilliant golden light. Its aura vastly increased, and a golden halo suddenly covered the entire warship as it became criss-crossed with lines of power. It seemed to have transformed into a long awl, shuttling through the air at an incomparably astonishing speed towards the massive, sky-filling Seawave Dao-soldier formation.

It was too fast! The warship's sudden explosion of speed made it move lightning-fast, catching the Seawave Dao-soldiers off-guard.

"Kill!" Immortal Duohe's already-gravelly voice suddenly rang out in the minds of every single Dao-soldier. All of them activated their elemental ki into their Dao-armors, and an enormous, endless amount of elemental ki passed through their armors as more than twenty thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers merged powers.

As for Immortal Duohe, he was the 'head' of this massive Seawave Dao-soldier formation. How to attack and how to defend...it was all up to him.

"Let's go," Immortal Duohe howled. The massive wave came smashing down towards the lightning-face warship. BOOM! The wave heavily struck the warship head-on.

The golden aura surrounding the warship, however, just trembled once, then regained its perfect stability. However, the collusive power was simply too great, causing the warship to be knocked backwards.

“We can’t charge them head-on,” Northson shouted hurriedly.

Ning and the others, standing within the warship, were incomparably stable. All of them had solemn looks on their faces, and they raised their heads to stare at the massive wave which came crashing down upon them once again.

“Uncle Fang, go,” Youngflame Nong said, gritting his teeth.

“Alright.” Xiangliu Fang let out a growling response, and each of his hands became filled with a long awl that emanating an astonishing aura. And then....swoosh! He passed straight through the outer layer of golden light surrounding the warship. The golden light didn’t impede him at all, allowing Xiangliu Fang to leave.

“Monsters, f\*ck off.”

Xiangliu Fang, having transformed into his true form of a three thousand meter tall, nine-headed, serpent-bodied Hydraga, went forward to clash with the massive, sky-filling wave. He began to launch his attack.

By now, his awls were also three thousand meters long. They struck out like the galloping thunder or the dancing lightning, stabbing directly into the wave.

“Puny Fiendgod, don’t even think of affecting us.” Immortal Duohe’s voice boomed out, and the massive, savage wave sent out another surge of power, smashing directly against the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang.

BOOM!

BOOM!

Skin tore open, and flesh split apart. Blood flew everywhere. One of the long awls was knocked flying, while Xiangliu Fang himself was sent hurtling through the air as well. Last time, although he was capable of fighting against Immortal Duohe’s monstrous Dao-soldiers, there had

only been ten thousand of them. This time, Immortal Duohe had unified all of the other smaller powers, forming a Seawave Dao-soldier formation of more than twenty thousand monsters. The power had increased several times over, causing even Xiangliu Fang to be completely unable to fight back.

“Come.” Xiangliu Fang’s hands stretched out, transforming into countless giant snakes and latching onto the discarded awl. The injuries on his body rapidly healed, and he once more fearlessly charged forward.

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.

The clashes between the Fiendgod and the wave contained enough power to shock the heavens and shake the earth.

Although the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, was in a position of absolute inferiority, he still managed to divert a large part of the power of the Seawave Dao-soldiers. For a moment, the warship, seeming incomparably tiny in the face of this vast wave, was able to once more advance at high speed, seizing the chance to hurtle forwards.

“Detestable.” Immortal Duohe was frantic as well. If he had to deal with Xiangliu Fang, it was hard to avoid the warship from advancing through openings in their defense.

He had no idea how this warship could have suddenly grown so powerful; despite the power of the waves and the collisive force of the blows, they still weren’t able to force the warship back.

“Zhenbao, you come and lead my tribe,” Immortal Duohe sent mentally. “We will divide into two Seawave Dao-soldier formations.”

“Yes, Master.”

Zhenbao was the disciple which Immortal Duohe trusted the most, and was second only to him in power. He was already a peak Primal, and was extremely powerful.

“Divide!”

Whoosh! Whoosh!

The massive wave in the air instantly split apart, dividing into two. The Seawave Dao-soldier formation personally commanded by Immortal Duohe, formed from many merged lesser monstrous tribes, went to block the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang. As for the other ten thousand Dao-soldiers, they were led by Daoist Zhenbao to block the warship.

.....

Ning and the others, within the warship, watched as the massive Fiendgod battled with the giant wave. The warship continued to advance forward at high speed.

“Hahaha, it is capable of stopping Uncle Fang, but not me.” Youngflame Nong’s eyes were filled with madness. “Keep charging. Charge to the edges of the palace, and I’ll be able to enter.”

Around them were countless waves, but the warship continued to charge forward with inexorable power.

“Eh?!”

The massive wave suddenly split apart, forming into two waves. One completely focused on stopping the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, and completely tied him down. The other, seemingly slightly weaker, was completely focused on guarding against the encroaching warship.

The advance of the warship instantly grew much more difficult.

“They separated?” Youngflame Nong ground his teeth. “Charge, charge, charge! Wildcore, blaze for me!”

BOOM!!!!

The light on the surface of the warship suddenly skyrocketed in luminosity, and its charging power grew even more ferocious. The ten thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers commanded by Daoist Zhenbao were completely capable of suppressing Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals, but in the face of this explosively powerful warship, they actually weren’t able to tie it down, and the warship continued to advance.

“Stop it, Zhenbao, stop it, stop it!” Immortal Duohe hurriedly sent a

mental message.

“Don’t worry, master, leave it to me!” Daoist Zhenbao was going crazy as well. His entire wave suddenly grew even more savage, transforming into a bloody color. As for the warship, it too advanced forward at a berserk speed.

“Faster, faster, faster.” Youngflame Nong gritted his teeth.

“Dangerous. This is dangerous. This is way too dangerous.” Northson’s eyelids were twitching as he watched. He hurriedly sent a mental message to Ning and the others, “Senior fellow disciples, be careful. Youngflame Nong has gone utterly mad. This Heaven-ranked construct-warship was unable to withstand the Wildcore to begin with, and now he’s burning its power like mad, causing its power to explode even more in a short period of time. The formation-diagrams within this Heaven-ranked warship can collapse at any moment. Once it does, the warship will be finished, and we’ll have to suffer the attacks from these ten thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers head on.”

Ning, Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, and the others all began to feel nervous.

“Charge, charge, charge!” Youngflame Nong’s face was completely red, and madness was in his eyes.

“Madman. He’s a madman.” Xue Hongyi, seeing this, felt panic in his heart. In front of the warship was that terrifying Seawave Dao-soldier formation; it was capable of splitting the skin and rending the flesh of even a Fiendgod like Xiangliu Fang. If the warship was destroyed and the wave slammed against them, it would probably break them all into tiny pieces.

Crack....

Crack crack crack...

Suddenly, the entire warship began to emanate sounds. Its charging speed began to lessen, and the aura of golden light around it began to grow unstable, starting to shudder.

“It’s breaking. It’s breaking!” Northson immediately called out, “Young

master Youngflame!!!”

As for Daoist Zhenbao, who was in command of the ten thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers, he naturally noticed that the speed of the warship he was in charge of dealing with was beginning to lessen, and that the golden light surrounding it was weakening. He immediately was overjoyed, and he bellowed out, “Kill them! Kill them all and seize the key!” Instantly, an even more terrifying wave-crest formed, smashing down viciously towards the warship!



# Chapter 17: One Instant, A Thousand Years

Ji Ning, Adept Vastriver, Yu Wei, Ninelotus, Mu Northson, and Xue Hongyi were all incomparably nervous.

As for Yu Wei, a dim spot of light appeared in her forehead.

Ning's elemental ki had already seeped into his storage-type magic treasure. Within it, there was a green leaf that was covered with gray runes, causing it to appear unfathomably mysterious. This was one of the two life-saving treasures which Ning had acquired within the underwater estate, the one meant for defense.

"Hm?" Ninelotus clenched her fist as well, and the skin on her arm began to vaguely emanate with white lotus flowers.

All of them were preparing to activate their life-saving treasures at a moment's notice. They stared towards the warship nervously, watching the shuddering, fluctuating golden barrier of light.

BOOM!

A massive, savage wave viciously struck against the barrier of light. The warship flipped over, but then continued to charge forward.

Despite the warship flipping over, Ning and the others all stood firmly on the floor of the warship, as though rooted to it. Their eyes couldn't help but suddenly widen as they all stared at the warship.

Crack crack rack....

A series of shuddering cracks rang out from inside the warship, the golden barrier of light began to dim.

"AAAAARGH! Damn you, damn you, DAMN YOU!" Youngflame Nong let out a throat-rending howl. A rolled paper scroll suddenly appeared within his hand. The scroll seemed quite ordinary; although paper was relatively rare in the Ji clan's territory, in Stillwater City, it was still quite common.

This seemingly ordinary scroll, however, had a single, large character

written atop it.

LOCK!

“Lock!” The gazes of Ning and everyone else were completely captivated by the ‘lock’ character on the paper scroll. It was an extremely simple character, but it emanated with the aura of a vast Dao, far broader and wider than the Dao of Rainwater and the Dao of the Inferno which Ning normally meditated on. In fact, Ning even felt a desire to submit and kowtow towards it.

Rumble!

The ‘lock’ character atop the scroll suddenly began to glow with light. It emanated a blurry radiance which spread out to the surrounding area, and the surrounding Seawave Dao-soldiers were caught by it as well.

In this moment...the wind halted. The water halted.

It was as though the world had frozen.

Ning and the others, however, were completely unaffected. All of them couldn’t help but feel astonished.

“What, what, what was that?!”

“Wait. Those Seawave Dao-soldiers are still moving, only...they are moving extremely slow.” Ning’s group immediately realized that the massive, surrounding wave hadn’t actually frozen; it was just advancing at an extremely slow pace.

Swoosh!

Without the Seawave Dao-soldiers blocking the way, the warship instantly traversed the final ten kilometers.

“Open!” The ashen-faced Youngflame Nong activated the key, and an illusory palace door instantly appeared in front of him. The warship immediately flew into the illusory gate, and then the gate swung shut.

Whoosh...

As Youngflame Nong and the others entered the illusory gate, the

massive wave, which had seemed to be almost frozen in place, suddenly came crashing down.

“How can...how can that have happened?” The leader of the Seawave Dao-soldiers, Daoist Zhenbao, stared in disbelief at the distant, already-shut palace door. “Just now, just then...”

He would never forget that feeling.

He clearly had already unleashed the full power of the Seawave Dao-soldiers, and had been attacking at high speed, but...how could the enemy warship have suddenly increased in speed by ten thousand times or a hundred thousand times? It was precisely because the enemy's speed had suddenly increased by an utterly ridiculous amount that he had been unable to control the wave and unleash an attack. Thus, the enemy had passed straight through his Dao-soldiers and entered the illusory palace gate.

“Master, they...how did they suddenly move so fast? I was completely unable to block them,” Daoist Zhenbao sent mentally.

The distant Immortal Duohe, who had been dealing with Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang in the distance, had actually been paying attention to the battle over here as well. After all, the humans aboard the warship were what mattered the most.

Just now, he had been completely stupefied as well.

“It wasn't that they were fast; it was that you were slow,” Immortal Duohe sent mentally. “All of the Dao-soldiers, in that instant, seemed to be crawling even slower than a baby turtle.”

“How can that be? I didn't feel as though my speed lessened, and none of the Dao-soldiers under my command felt that their speed had lessened,” Daoist Zhenbao said frantically.

“That's because...time changed for you. You should have heard the saying, ‘a day in the Deva realm, a year in the mortal realms’, right? This is because time passes at different rates in the Deva realm and in the mortal realms. Perhaps in the Deva realm, you might only feel as though

a day had passed, but in the mortal realm, a year might have passed. This is exactly what happened just now. You felt as though just an instant had passed, but in reality, an extremely long period of time had passed, and the enemy warship flew more than ten kilometers away.” A hint of despair was in Immortal Duohe’s eyes. “These humans were actually able to produce such a treasure...can it be that the Heavens themselves wish to destroy those of us in this Immortal estate world?”

Daoist Zhenbao now understood as well. So it was time. Time had changed for them.

It was as though an instant had passed for him, but thousands of years had passed for them; when time flowed at completely different rates, what happened just now would occur.

“There’s actually a treasure like this...” Daoist Zhenbao murmured to himself.

“Hahaha...you aren’t capable of stopping my young master. You aren’t capable of it!” The distant Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, had already begun to flee. As he did so, his laughter echoed out in the heavens.

The Seawave Dao-soldiers were completely unable to catch him with their attacks. When Xiangliu Fang completely focused on running away, they weren’t able to catch up to him at all.

“Let’s go, all of us.” Immortal Duohe had the appearance of a middle-aged man, but in that instant, he seemed to have aged significantly.

Rumble...

The two Seawave Dao-soldier formations reformed into one, and the massive seawave flew at high speed towards the distant.

A short period of time later, the massive Seawave Dao-soldiers reunited with the Yaksha Dao-soldiers.

“You actually failed? Failed?!” Immortal Witchsui sent a mental message over, and the other members of the Witchriver clan looked at them as well.

“Failed.” Immortal Duohe said hoarsely, “These humans actually held an inconceivably powerful treasure.” Earlier, the two sides had been separated by ten thousand kilometers, and so the Witchriver clan hadn’t been able to clearly watch the exchange of battle.

“What sort of treasure was it, for it to be able to break through your defense?” Immortal Witchsui asked.

“A treasure capable of affecting time itself,” Immortal Duohe said, shaking his head.

“Time?” Immortal Witchsui was shocked as well. He was, after all, of the Witchriver clan; he knew some secrets. Generally speaking, it was fairly common for Celestial Immortals to encounter treasures that affected time itself. For Celestial Immortals, it was a common type of attack. But it was rare for even even one out of ten thousand Earth Immortals to become a Celestial Immortal...

Treasures capable of influencing the flow of time, to Loose Immortals, were incomparably powerful. The Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals of the outside world might have witnessed such treasures before, but these two Loose Immortals of the Immortal estate world had only heard of them.

“Don’t worry,” Immortal Witchsui sent mentally. “It is already incredible that the human had even one such treasure. I refuse to believe he has a second one.” Immortal Duohe nodded as well.

“Duohe, we have no way out now. This is the last palace. We have to guard it! This is our last chance to acquire the key to the Immortal estate,” Immortal Witchsui said. “The dream which those of us within the Immortal estate have held for countless generations...this is our very last chance.”

“Not just our last chance at leaving,” Immortal Duohe said hoarsely. “Our last chance at survival as well.”

“Survival?” Immortal Witchsui was startled...and then, his face turned completely pale.

“Someone capable of having a treasure like this, and having a Fiendgod serve as a guard...these humans definitely have an extraordinary background.” Immortal Duohe’s voice echoed out in the minds of every single Dao-soldier. He slowly said something which caused terror in every single monstrous Dao-soldier’s heart. “After he completely binds this final palace, then he will be in complete control fo the entire Immortal estate. By then, he can do whatever he wants to us; everything will be under his control. He can also summon an army from the outside world, or he can also destroy the environment of this Immortal estate world, causing our descendants to not even have anything to eat or drink, starving them to death. In short...if he binds this Immortal estate, he will have countless tools at his disposal.”

All of the monsters were terrified. Right. If the enemy was to control the Immortal estate, he could launch sneak attacks from anywhere in the estate. If he were to toss out some powerful, deadly poisons...

It would be too simple to destroy an area of mere tens of thousands of kilometers. Some terrifyingly powerful poisons were capable of causing an area of tens of thousands of kilometers to be completely poisoned, where not even a blade of grass would grow.

Creation was hard. Destruction was easy. After destroying the environment of this Immortal world, a few tens of thousands of years later, most likely almost no one would be left alive within it.

“This is our last hope.”

“This is our last chance.”

“We have to fight.”

“We have to seize the key to the Immortal estate.”

“Even if all of us die, we cannot let them bind this final palace!!!” Immortal Duohe’s voice rang out in the skies.

“Fight.”

“Fight!”

“FIGHT!”

All of the monsters howled in anger. All of them brimmed with eagerness for battle. This was no longer a battle for freedom; it was a true battle for survival!

.....

Within an ancient palace.

The warship had charged in, and as soon as it did, the golden glow around it completely vanished. The mysterious, powerful aura that had previously permeated the warship was completely gone; it seemed completely inert and lifeless.

“The formation-diagrams finally collapsed.” Northson shook his head. “Towards the end, the warship was just flying forward on momentum. A Heaven-ranked construct-warship, just like that, was destroyed.”

“The Heaven-ranked construct-warship was nothing.” Adept Vastriver shook his head, gesturing with his eyes. “Take a look at young master Youngflame.”

Ning and the others had noticed as well. Youngflame Nong was currently clutching that paper scroll, staring fixedly at the ‘lock’ character atop it. Alas, the ‘lock’ character now seemed completely ordinary. There was nothing special about it at all.

“One Instant, A Thousand Years,” Yu Wei said softly. “This sort of treasure, when used, can virtually guarantee the death of a Loose Immortal. Although this sort of treasure isn’t Immortal-ranked, it isn’t too far from it in value.”

Ning and the others were puzzled. The nearby Ninelotus, seeing the look on Ning’s face, sent mentally to him, “One Instant, A Thousand Years - this name symbolizes the ability of this sort of treasure to affect the rate of time. For you, it might feel as though an instant had passed, but for the enemy, more than a thousand years would have passed. But of course, that’s only an extremely, overly extravagant description. In short, when the rate of time is flowing at very different speeds, a Primal Daoist is

capable of killing a Loose Immortal. From this, you can tell how precious this treasure is.”

Ning understood.

Originally, when he had been received the [Starseizing Hand] transmission in the transmission space of the underwater estate, he had spent months within, but time in the outside world had barely moved. This was indeed far more incredible than a mere scroll.

“Damn. Damn.” Youngflame Nong stared at the scroll in his hand, grinding his teeth.



# Chapter 18: The Dao Repository of the Ji Clan

“Judging from the look on young master Youngflame’s face, he must be about to go crazy from grief.” Mu Northson’s mental voice had a hint of schadenfreude to it. This exalted young master had taken one one powerful treasure after another. How could Ji Ning, Northson, Xue Hongyi, and the others not feel powerless before them?

They all understood that they were nothing more than geniuses of Stillwater Commandery...while the man before them was very likely going to be the next Godplume Duke! Someone who was even more exalted than the Marquis of Stillwater!

Even though he was just the heir to the position, the treasures he possessed were enough to cause Ning and the others to constantly sigh in amazement.

“The monsters of this Immortal estate...I won’t spare any of them.” Youngflame Nong ground his teeth. To charge into this fourth palace, he had to use up his Heaven-ranked construct-warship, a Wildcore, and his ‘Lock’ scroll; psychologically, he had been completely unprepared to have to use up all three treasures. And this was just the fourth palace; by now the Seawave Dao-soldiers and the Yaksha Dao-soldiers had surely assembled outside the fifth and final palace. The cost for them to enter that fifth palace would definitely be incomparably astonishing. Just thinking about it made young master Youngflame feel miserable.

“I am definitely going to enslave them all, then sell them offer to various tribes. Their descendants will forever be slaves,” Youngflame Nong said with a hate-filled voice.

“Young master Youngflame.” Xue Hongyi spoke out softly.

“Yes?” Young master Youngflame looked at him. “What is it?”

Xue Hongyi immediately smiled and said, “Young master, are you worrying about entering the fifth palace? As I see it, actually, there’s no

need to fight head-on against them. These monsters just want to leave this Immortal estate world, right? Young master, you can promise to let them leave. I imagine that these monsters would be willing to accept. Each of you can set an oath to the Dao of the Heavens, which they wouldn't dare violate. In this way, young master, you would be able to enter the fifth palace without using up any treasures. What do you think, young master?"

Xue Hongyi thought that his idea was a good one.

Young master Youngflame gave him a cold glance. Between grinding teeth, he spoke out two words: "You imbecile!"

"Young..." Xue Hongyi's face instantly turned red.

Being a genius of cultivation didn't necessarily mean that one was intelligent in handling worldly affairs. Still, Xue Hongyi was still quite intelligent; upon being rebuked as young master Youngflame as an 'imbecile', although he felt incredibly insulted, he then immediately understood what Youngflame Nong was thinking.

Ninelotus, standing next to Ning, sent a mental laugh to him. "This Xue Hongyi really is an imbecile. Since young master Youngflame has elected to come to this estate, he most likely has already prepared for all contingencies. As far as he is concerned, if he can bind this estate, then all of the monsters within can be toyed with as he pleases; they wouldn't even be able to escape. Tens of thousands of monster-slaves, and all of which are Dao-soldiers as well! There are even precious Yaksha Dao-soldiers here...only Celestial Immortals could afford to be so extravagant. Once he offers these Dao-soldiers to his clan, not only will he be able to make up for his losses, he will be rewarded richly! To negotiate with the monsters and to let them leave...isn't this the same as letting an enormous fortune just walk away?"

Ning nodded his head. The vast number of Seawave Dao-armors and Yaksha Dao-armors alone was an inestimable fortune.

"This palace actually doesn't even have a single golem within, nor are there any attacking formations." Youngflame Nong no longer focused on

his losses, instead carefully inspecting the palace.

“Hmph.” He suddenly waved his hand, and a bubbling, boiling black strand of elemental ki spread out in every direction, striking against the walls of the palace. Rumble, rumble, rumble. The palace walls were incomparably sturdy, but under the assault of the elemental ki, three words suddenly appeared on the palace wall in front of them: DAO REPOSITORY PALACE.

“Dao Repository Palace?” The eyes of Ning and everyone else lit up.

Every single power needed to build a Dao Repository. Even the Ji clan of West Prefecture City had its own vault that was used for hiding sutras and scripts for its descendants to learn from. The Black-White College had its own Dao Repository as well. Immortal Witchriver had his own forces; although his roots weren’t as deep and his history wasn’t as old as the Black-White College, he vastly surpassed the likes of Snowdragon Mountain.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Without even waiting for Youngflame Nong to say anything, Ning and the others transformed into streaks of light, charging towards a corridor right next to the three characters, ‘DAO REPOSITORY PALACE’. The reason they all charged towards this corridor was because this was the only corridor there was.

“These guys...” With a swooshing sound, Youngflame Nong charged forward as well.

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Upon charging into the corridor, what greeted them was a massive, vast hall. The insides of this hall were filled with countless books, a veritable sea of them, most likely not much smaller than the Dao Repository of the Black-White College.

“Quick, take them.”

“Quick.”

All of them seemed to have been possessed.

Every single power cared deeply about its techniques and secret arts. If they were to find any which the Black-White College was not in possession of and offer it to them, they would be able to acquire enormous sums of black-white pellets.

“Whoosh.” Ning waved his hand, and a large number of books in front of him were immediately collected in into his storage-type magic treasure.

As for the Azure Skysnake, she blinked from place to place, calling out in celebration, “C’mere, all of ya!” The books beneath her all vanished.

“Come.” The Whitewater Hound collected the books before him as well.

“Take them.”

“These are mine.”

Xue Hongyi had gone crazy as well. Everyone, including the final person to enter, Youngflame Nong, began to quickly collect the books.

Although this giant hall had a massive number of books, in just a few moments, the entire hall had been completely emptied out. In the end, they didn’t even spare the shelves used to carry the books.

“Look at how crazy all of you have gotten.” Youngflame Nong shook his head. “I hope these aren’t just the abridged versions. All of you will be stupefied if they are.”

Ning and the others knew this as well. It was very likely that the books here were simple abridged versions...but no one wanted to take the risk that they weren’t. After all, it would take some time to ascertain if a book was an abridged version or not, and in the time it took, everyone else would have seized all the other books.

“Let’s take a look.” Ning and the others started to take out one book after another, perusing through them carefully. Moments later...

“Abridged.”

“This one is abridged; it just has the very first part of the technique.”

“This is abridged.”

“This one is also abridged.”

“This one isn’t abridged, it is complete, but it is actually the most commonly seen formation technique.”

All of them were instantly downfallen; nearly ninety percent of the books were abridged, and as for the complete versions? They were commonly known commodities; in the Black-White College, one didn’t even have to use black-white pellets to trade for them. Almost all larger schools had them.

The books with more valuable techniques, secret arts, and divine abilities...were all abridged.

“Almost all of these are abridged,” Ning mused to himself. “But there should definitely a place where the full versions are located. The full versions should be located in a more hidden area. I refuse to believe that Immortal Witchriver carried all of those books with him. Can it be that his clansmen wouldn’t need to train while he was wandering and adventuring?”

Swoosh! Ning immediately scurried towards one of the four corridors leading away from the massive hall.

It wasn’t just Ning who had come to this conclusion; the others had as well. There had to be complete versions somewhere! And that place was most likely hidden.

Swoosh. Youngflame Nong, by relying on the affinity from the key to the estate, moved into one corridor, quickly discovering a private room.

“Here it is.” Youngflame Nong entered the room, immediately seeing the skeleton within it.

This skeleton was the guardian of the Dao Repository Palace!

“In you go.” Youngflame Nong collected the skeleton, and then turned his gaze towards a stone book. His key was telling him...that this stone book was the core for the entire Dao Repository Palace.

“Bind.” Youngflame Nong just bound a small part of it, then came to a halt. He only needed to bind a small part of it to ensure that all of the formations and restrictive spells within the Dao Repository Palace would be deactivated.

And then, Youngflame Nong quickly left the room, beginning to search as well. If he were to locate a powerful divine ability or secret art which the Youngflame clan didn’t already possess, he would be rendering a major merit. However, given how ancient and powerful the Youngflame clan was...it was very, very hard to discover secret arts or divine abilities they didn’t already have.

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Ning’s divine sense had been activated long ago, filling every single part of the hall he was in. However, since the walls of the Immortal estate blocked out divine sense, he wasn’t able to search deeper.

“Ning, son, quick, come over here!” Uncle White suddenly sent him a mental message.

Ning, just about to push open a stone door and investigate, suddenly came to a halt. He transformed into a streak of light, hurrying towards Uncle White’s direction. Just a few seconds later, he entered a private room.

Within the private room, there were rows of books, all of which were protected by restrictive spells. However, these restrictive spells were all inactive, and the Whitewater Hound, Xue Hongyi, and Adept Vastriver were frantically seizing them.’

“Quick.”

Ning had no time to waste. He began to frantically start collecting books. Actually, as soon as he entered the room and saw the books and bookshelves, Ning felt quite certain that they should all be complete versions. This was because generally speaking, complete versions of techniques would span up to ten full volumes. Abridged versions, in turn, might take up just a thin book.

“...and this. And this!” Ning was frantically collecting books.

A short while later, the entire room was completely empty. The final person to arrive, young master Youngflame, was only able to collect a few books.

“These are all full versions.” Ning and the others began to look through the books they had acquired.

“Eh? Just Earth-ranked techniques?”

“This one is Mortal-ranked?”

“These ‘secret arts’ are too ordinary.” Ning and the others began to frown as they looked. They were all geniuses, and in the Black-White College, they chose from Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques. However, the books they had found here were all Mortal-ranked and Earth-ranked techniques and secret arts. Although the books were extremely numerous, there wasn’t even a single Heaven-ranked technique.

“My Youngflame clan has plenty of this sort of crap. There isn’t even a single useful book here.” Youngflame Nong furrowed his brows, shaking his head.

Ning, however, just laughed. Right. These books were useless to him, but they would be very useful to the Ji clan. The Ji clan had far, far too few techniques and secret arts, and those they had, he had purchased from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. But how many could he possibly buy, on his own? To accumulate a large number of secret arts and techniques, generally speaking, the only way was annihilate another large clan and seize their books.

“More than a million techniques and secret arts. Although they aren’t that good, they are enough for Xiantian lifeforms and Zifu Disciples to use,” Ning mused to himself. “In the future, after I find some top-tier Ki Refining techniques, my Ji clan will be able to set up a Dao Repository of its own to pass down to later generations.”

Dao Repositories were the heart of any tribe, sect, or school. Each

generation relied on their Dao Repositories to grow strong.

“Immortal Witchriver was a Celestial Immortal; he definitely must have more powerful techniques and divine abilities. But where are they?” Youngflame Nong frowned.

“The most powerful techniques and divine abilities must be stored in extremely well-hidden places. They might not even be in this Dao Repository Palace.”

Ning and the others just pondered briefly, and then...swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! They all scattered in different directions, searching for treasures. Although this Dao Repository Vault didn't necessarily have any top-tier techniques, secret arts, or divine abilities, perhaps it did!

Swoosh.

Youngflame Nong once more returned to that earlier room. He sat down in the lotus position in front of the stone book, beginning to once more bind the core of this Dao Repository Palace.

“Once I bind it, I'll be in complete control of this entire Dao Repository Palace. No matter how well-hidden a room is, I'll know about it,” Youngflame Nong mused to himself. “I need roughly two hours to bind it. Given how well-hidden the top-tier secret arts and divine abilities must be, they might not be able to find them within two hours.”



# Chapter 19: Pentabolt Vajra, Soldiers of the Mind

“The top-tier techniques, divine abilities, and secrets arts. They are going to be mine, all mine!” Xue Hongyi was rapidly checking one room after another, his eyes filled with an endless frenzy. He came from Snowdragon Mountain, which currently didn’t even have a single Loose Immortal; even if it did occasionally produce a Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal throughout its long history, there was no way those figures could compare to a Celestial Immortal like Immortal Witchriver.

The divine abilities and secret arts left behind by a Celestial Immortal would definitely be extraordinary.

When one’s level of power was very close to another’s, the deciding factor were divine abilities and secret arts. This was especially true for geniuses.

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“This is a chance. A tremendous chance. I have to find it. With powerful secret arts, in this life, I might be able to overcome the Celestial tribulation.” Adept Vastriver was filled with endless desire as well.

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Everyone was searching. Ji Ning, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing had separated as well.

“Where is it? Where could it be?” A little azure serpent was slithering forward like a streak of light, occasionally disappearing into thin air and reappearing somewhere else, and at other times moving directly into a room without even pushing the stone door open.

“For me, finding fortunes is as easy as eating rice, but in this Immortal estate, I’ve gotten fewer treasures than even Uncle White.” The Azure Skysnake used her Void Blink technique repeatedly, and even blinked from one end of a hallway to the other to save time, or directly into rooms. She wildly teleported about with abandon, trying to find

something.

Whoosh.

Yet another Void Blink. The Azure Skysnake appeared within a new room. “Nothing here eith...” The Azure Skysnake suddenly came to a halt. “Eeee?”

The Azure Skysnake looked about this room in surprise. This was a very ordinary room. It wasn't very large, and it only held two bookcases and a single table. The bookcase was covered with a few books, while the number of books on the table was even more pitifully low. The total number of books in this entire room was very low.

“That's all?”

It must be understood that training tomes for Immortal cultivators were extremely massive and complicated; a single set might comprise of dozens of books. For example, when Ji Ning had received the transmission of the [Starseizing Hand] divine ability, it had been directly transferred to his soul, and had taken several months. From this, one could tell how massive the amount of information was.

The Azure Skysnake couldn't help but transform into an azure-robed maiden. She lowered her head to glance at the books, and as she did, her gaze narrowed.

“Master, master, quick, come quick!!!” Little Qing hurriedly shouted through their spirit-link.

“Wha..? Coming!”

Ji Ning, located in another region, spread out his divine sense, searching through the various corridors. Given that he could mentally sense where Little Qing was located, he quickly found a route to her. As he did, he felt extremely surprised. “Little Qing actually ran to this place? This place really is rather unassuming and out of the way. How long would it have taken to find such a tiny little study?”

Swoosh!

Ning immediately transformed into a streak of smoke, rapidly advancing forward and soon arriving outside the room. He pushed the door open.

“What is it?” Upon entering, Ning saw that the room was completely empty. There was nothing there, aside from Little Qing, who stood there.

“I collected it all,” Little Qing said excitedly. “I didn’t dare leave them here, for fear that others might take them.”

“What techniques did you discover? Why are you so careful?” Ning began to grow excited as well.

Little Qing said in a lowered whisper, “Six types of Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques, totaling more than three hundred volumes. Three types of divine abilities, totalling more than a hundred volumes. One divine will technique, totaling six volumes. All of them are complete!”

Ning’s eyes instantly turned completely round.

Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques?

Divine abilities?

A divine will technique?

This...this was truly, truly priceless. Even in the Black-White College, it would number amongst their top-tier materials.

“This room was actually filled with Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques, divine abilities, and divine will techniques.” Ning quickly understood. “Previously, we only discovered Mortal-ranked and Earth-ranked techniques and what not...I imagine that another room was used to store Heaven-ranked techniques and arts.”

Mortal, Earth, Heaven, Immortal - the higher the rank was, the more precious the technique was. Now that he had acquired the Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques, divine abilities, and a divine will technique, Ning was no longer too interested in those Heaven-ranked techniques and arts. It’d be nice if he could get them, but it wouldn’t matter if he didn’t.

“Master, they are all over here.” Little Qing waved her hand, and a pile

of books instantly appeared in front of her.

Ning was so terrified that he instantly waved his hand, collecting them into his own storage-type magic treasure. He actually began to sweat from fear. “How could you just take them out?!”

“It’s better to leave them with you. I’m not a Fiendgod Body Refiner; those divine abilities are useless to me. I already have top-tier Ki Refining techniques of my own as well. Right...later, I’ll give that divine will technique a try,” Little Qing instructed.

“Right.” Ning nodded. He immediately sent his divine sense into his storage treasure, beginning to investigate.

There were only a few hundred tomes present; in total, there were ten complete sets! Six sets of Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques! Three sets of divine abilities! One divine will technique!

“These Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques are useless to me. The divine abilities?” Ning swept them with his divine sense. “[Heavenly Transformation], [Three Heads, Six Arms], and [Pentabolt Vajra].” This caused Ning to feel delighted.

[Heavenly Transformation] was a commonly seen divine ability, which virtually all larger schools and sects possessed.

[Three Heads, Six Arms] was in the possession of the Black-White College, but it could be considered quite a precious divine ability. Ning had yet to train in it, primarily because he didn’t have enough black-white pellets yet. Now, however, he had acquired it, and a complete set at that!

“This ability, [Three Heads, Six Arms]...when executed, it will allow me to grow four more arms that are identical to real arms.” Ning was extremely excited. Actually, at the Void level, powerful Fiendgod Body Refiners were capable of transforming a single strand of hair into a clone, and could completely change their physical appearance. It would be extremely easy to even generate eighteen new arms, but that would just be a superficial change; those wouldn’t be true arms.

The reason why [Three Heads, Six Arms] was so powerful was because the heads and arms it generated were absolutely real, allowing one's power to truly rise exponentially! Ning could execute the [Starseizing Hand] divine ability with two arms, but once he used the [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique, all six arms would be able to use the [Starseizing Hand]...this was why Ning had always deeply desire to acquire this technique.

"I didn't acquire it at the Black-White College, but I acquired it here." Ning was absolutely overjoyed. "The [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique, when synergized with my [Starseizing Hand]...the power will definitely be exponentially greater."

"[Pentabolt Vajra]?" Ning, with a thought, made a book appear in his hand. It was the first volume of the [Pentabolt Vajra]. He began to flip through it...

The [Pentabolt Vajra] was a divine ability which only a true Fiendgod, or perhaps a Fiendgod Body Refiner who was very close to being a true Fiendgod, was capable of learning.

"Fortunately, I trained in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]." Ning let out a secret sigh of relief. Previously, when he had been at the local Raindragon Guard branch, Ning had discovered that some supreme, top-tier divine abilities had extremely high requirements for Fiendgod Body Refiners. Some actually stated outright that only someone who trained in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] or someone who was a true Fiendgod could train in them.

That Immortal of the Raindragon Guard had also told Ning...that once he passed the trials of the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains, he would soon come to learn how truly powerful the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was.

The reason the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was so mighty was because it allowed the user to train in some truly top-tier divine abilities, including some which generally only Fiendgods were able to use.

“[Pentabolt Vajra]...to bathe in thunder and lightning and form a vajra-like body. Only after five baptisms by five types of lightning can one be said to have mastered it. But the fifth one actually requires one to be at the Empyrean God level before training in it?” Ning was secretly shocked.

It was the same as the [Starseizing Hand], which was divided into the Six Cycles. The [Pentabolt Vajra] was divided into five levels; the highest level was only trainable by Empyrean Gods. Only at that level could this divine ability be truly perfected to a supreme level.

“This is the simplified version of the legendary divine ability, [Golden Nirmana Body]?” 1 Ning, upon seeing this, nodded in understanding. The very first tome said it plainly; this divine ability’s creator had developed it as a simplified version of the [Golden Nirmana Body], to be left to his descendants.

The [Golden Nirmana Body]...it was a legendary divine ability that was one of the top divine abilities of the entire Three Realms. From the notes in this tome, at least, the [Golden Nirmana Body] was one of the absolute best divine abilities. Ning hypothesized that it should be on the same general level as his own [Starseizing Hand].

“I wonder which major power simplified the [Golden Nirmana Body] into this [Pentabolt Vajra],” Ning mused to himself. “To be able to simplify it...this major power must be incredible.”

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Ning waved his hand, collecting the divine ability book, then took out the divine will technique. There was only one of them, and it was titled [Soldiers of the Mind].

“Soldiers of the Mind?” Ning had just begun to flip through it, but he suddenly frowned, then hurriedly sent through their spirit-link, “Little Qing, hurry up and leave.”

Swoosh. Little Qing instantly disappeared into thin air.

BOOM. The stone door was pushed open, and Xue Hongyi charged in.

“You?!” Xue Hongyi stared in astonishment towards Ning.

“What a coincidence.” Ning glanced at Xue Hongyi, then paid him no attention, immediately flying out from the stone door that had just been opened.

Xue Hongyi frowned as he studied the room. It was completely empty, with nothing within. He hesitated a moment, then shook his head. “Nah... no way...” He then turned and left, continuing the search.

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Each of the rooms within the Dao Repository Palace were hidden quite well. Ning continued to frantically search through them in a seemingly crazed manner. He didn’t want others to know that he had already acquired top-tier Ki Refining techniques, divine abilities, and a divine will technique. It must be understood that the Yuchi clan had suffered annihilation, simply because they had been discovered to be in possession of a single divine ability, the [Windwing Evasion].

Thus, it was best not to casually reveal such things.

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“Whew.”

Youngflame Nong gave the stone book in front of him a glance. He had already completely refined the core to this Dao Repository Palace, and everything within it was now under his control.

“Eh?” He closed his eyes, sensing everything in the palace. “Nothing? There is actually nothing?”

His senses were telling him that the entire Dao Repository Palace didn’t have a single book within it. It was completely empty.

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Another hour passed. Ning and the others had just reunited with Youngflame Nong at the outermost hall.

“We’re all here. Did you find any divine abilities or secret arts?” Youngflame Nong laughed as he looked at them.

“Nothing.”

“Nothing.”

They all shook their heads. Ning, too, shook his head. “Nothing.”

“The Rainbowflame Fairy and Adept Vastriver were fairly lucky; they discovered those Heaven-ranked techniques,” Xue Hongyi spoke out. “But...there should be Immortal-ranked techniques, divine abilities, and secret arts. We didn’t find them anywhere.”

“Can it be that those things were too valuable, and so they weren’t placed in the Dao Repository Vault, and were instead hidden somewhere else?” Northson said.

“Hm, that’s possible,” Ning nodded.

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1. It is indeed Nirmana, not Nirvana. This bit actually took me nearly half an hour to research and completely comprehend. The actual term in Chinese was ‘丈六金身’, literally ‘Zhang Six Golden Body’. Zhang is a term referring to 3.3 meters, so this would literally mean ‘20 Meter Golden Body’. I did some research, and the phrase 丈六金身 refers to one of the manifestations of Buddha’s corporeal/created body. In Buddhism, the Lord Buddha has three bodies (Trikaya); the Dharmakaya (Truth body), the Nirmanakaya (the created/corporeal body), and the Sambhogakaya (I’m not even sure how to translate this one). Since this 20 Meter Golden Body was basically one of the manifestations of the Nirmanakaya/Nirmana Body, I decided to translate this as Golden Nirmana Body.



# Chapter 20: The Final Palace

Youngflame Nong gave the group of Wanxiang Adepts a look. He mused to himself, "Perhaps they aren't in the Dao Repository Palace...or perhaps one of them has them. Still, Immortal Witchriver was merely a Diremonster Immortal; his roots weren't that deep. Even if he had some divine abilities or techniques, the Youngflame clan probably has them as well. And they are still very useful to me..."

"Everyone, since we have finished our investigations, then let us head to the final palace," Youngflame Nong said.

"Right."

Ning and the others immediately began to grow nervous.

"Let's go!" Youngflame Nong took out yet another magic treasure, a flying weaver's shuttle. The flying shuttle expanded to thirty meters long and ten meters wide. Ning and the others entered it, which was quite roomy.

Swish! The flying shuttle immediately exited the Dao Repository Palace. As they emerged, the Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang was already waiting for them.

"Young master." Xiangliu Fang transformed into a streak of light, flying towards the shuttle

Youngflame Nong smiled and nodded towards Xiangliu Fang, seeming somewhat relaxed. But then, he turned his head to stare at the final golden Skypillar of light, and the many monstrous Dao-soldiers guarding it. He snorted coldly, "These monstrous Dao-soldiers have blocked me repeatedly. After I bind this Immortal estate, I am definitely going to repay them for their actions!"

"How could the monsters of a puny little Immortal estate possibly withstand the Youngflame clan?" Xiangliu Fang laughed as well, and Youngflame Nong nodded.

Ning and the others were secretly surprised...why was it that

Youngflame Nong didn't seem to be the slightest bit worried?

"So many monstrous Dao-soldiers..." Ning mused to himself, "The Seawave Dao-soldiers and the Yaksha Dao-soldiers are all far more powerful than ordinary Loose Immortals; even Xiangliu Fang was dominated. What sort of treasure does this Youngflame Nong have?"

"Senior apprentice-brother, he seems quite confident," Northson said with a smirk.

"Let's watch and see," Ning sent back.

As the flying shuttle continued to fly forward, constantly advancing towards that distant golden Skypillar of light and the Seawave Dao-soldiers and the Yaksha Dao-soldier formations surrounding it. They were now quite close.

"Humans!" A deep voice shook the heavens.

Youngflame Nong just laughed icily, while next to him, Xiangliu Fang spoke out on his behalf. "What is it?"

"Actually, there is no need for you to fight with us, the monstrous races of the Immortal estate world. So long as you are willing to open up a corridor out with your key and let us leave to the world of the Grand Xia Empire, then we are willing to permit you to enter this final palace," the deep voice said. Immortal Duohe and Immortal Witchsui both felt that, given these humans still dared to advance in the face of so many monstrous Dao-soldiers, that they probably felt confident in passing through them. Thus, Immortal Duohe and Immortal Witchsui quickly came to the decision of negotiating with these humans.

"Let you leave? That's not impossible." Youngflame Nong revealed a smile. "But I have a requirement."

"Oh? Speak. What requirement." The deep voice echoed forth once more.

"Simple. Hand over all of your Dao-armors, and I'll let you leave." Youngflame Nong's voice also echoed out in the skies.

“All of our Dao-armors?”

“Impossible.”

“Kill this human.”

“In his dreams!”

All sorts of ferocious howls rang out.

These Dao-armors had been left behind by Immortal Witchriver, and were the reason why these monsters were so powerful.

“Without the Dao-armors, we would be like a pile of loose sand; we wouldn’t even be able to defeat that Fiendgod by your side. In fact, we’d probably be beaten by him instead,” the deep voice thundered angrily.

“I can swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens that if you are willing to hand over all of your Dao-armors, that I will let you leave and will not pursue or kill you,” Youngflame Nong said.

The Dao-armors interested Youngflame Nong the most; if he could obtain them easily, then he wouldn’t mind letting the wielders of them leave.

“Impossible!” The deep voice bellowed angrily.

“Then don’t blame me for this,” Youngflame Nong shook his head.

“You are forcing us!” The deep voice snarled.

“Right. So what if I am?” Youngflame Nong snickered.

These powerful monsters were bloodthirsty to begin with. Given how excessive Youngflame Nong had behaved, they were now truly angered.

“Kill.”

“Kill.”

“Kill.”

An enormous, sky-filling wave arose, blotting out the heavens and smashing down towards the flying shuttle which Ning and Youngflame Nong were riding. The flying shuttle, however, went directly towards the

giant wave with incredible agility.

“This is the moment.” A long time ago, Youngflame Nong had produced a queer-looking disc in his hand, which was a mixture of black and white in color.

“POLARIS STARSHIFTER!”

Youngflame Nong let out an angry roar.

Rumble...

This black and white bi-colored disc floated into the air. A ray of black light enveloped the entire flying shuttle, while a ray of white light shot directly towards part of the distant Yaksha Dao-soldiers.

Whoosh!

Space instantly distorted.

That portion of the distant Yaksha Dao-soldiers instantly disappeared, then appeared in the location where the shuttle had been. As for the flying shuttle, it appeared in the location where those Yaksha Dao-soldiers had been.

“Open.” As soon as the shuttle appeared, a corridor into the palace appeared. Swoosh! The long shuttle flew directly into the tunnel, and then the gate shut behind it.

“This...”

Immortal Duohe and Immortal Witchsui were completely stunned. All of the Dao-soldiers were stunned. Then stared stupidly at the bi-colored black and white disc. As the energies of the disc were used up, it silently, soundlessly shattered.

“They entered?”

“They entered, just like that?” Immortal Duohe and Immortal Witchsui, as well as all the other monsters, had looks of disbelief, anger, and despair in their eyes.

“It shouldn’t have been like this. It shouldn’t have...” Immortal Duohe’s

eyes were filled with boundless rage. Raising his head, he let out an earth-rending, pained, agonized roar.

They had lost. Utterly lost.

If this had been an actual battle, teleporting away a small part of their Dao-soldiers would have only been a minor matter. But this wasn't an actual battle; the enemy, upon teleporting those soldiers away, had immediately been able to enter the final palace.

"After this, the Immortal estate will be bound. After this, all of us will be under his control." Immortal Witchsui was mumbling to himself.

In this moment, the countless monstrous Dao-soldiers were all howling in anger, grief, and despair...

.....

Swoosh.

A long shuttle appeared within the hall, with Youngflame Nong, Xiangliu Fang, Ji Ning, and the others within it. They all emerged from within.

"Hahaha." Youngflame Nong, upon entering, began to laugh joyfully. "We've finally arrived at the final palace. Mmm, and it is quite beautiful as well, far more so than those other four palaces."

Ning and the others were still feeling shocked by what had happened with that bi-colored disc. It had actually caused them to completely swap positions with the distant enemy Dao-soldiers. What treasure was that? Ning, at least, had never even heard of such a treasure.

"It really is much more beautiful. Every single pillar is exquisitely, intricately carved," Xue Hongyi said quickly.

"The final palace. After binding it, the entire Immortal estate will be under my control, and the trial the clan gave me will have been concluded. I'll have earned an Immortal estate as well." Youngflame Nong was quite delighted, but then he let out a sigh. "What a pity, though... after entering this Immortal estate, I lost two of my three most powerful

treasures.”

“Treasures are meant to be used. After you master the Immortal estate, you’ll acquire even better treasures, young master,” Xiangliu Fang said.

“I hope so.” Youngflame Nong still felt a bit of pain in his heart. The ‘Lock’ scroll and the Polaris Starshifter disc were two of the most powerful magic treasures he had on him. These were treasures which even many Loose Immortals didn’t have access to; even if one had large amounts of liquefied elemental essence, it would be difficult to purchase them. After all, they were simply too rare. Youngflame Nong had only managed to acquire them after many years of collecting resources. Still, for the sake of solidifying his status as the next Godplume Duke, he had no other choices.

“Acquiring the Immortal estate will mean that I’ll have recouped my costs, and earned a little on top of it. Those monsters...hmph. They should make their preparations for all of their descendants to forever be slaves.” A cold light flashed through Youngflame Nong’s eyes. “And that Xue Hongyi...I need to acquire his Immortal-ranked magic treasure as well.”

# Chapter 21: Preparing a Celebratory Feast

This impressive group of experts filed in through a corridor, arriving at a massive, towering hall. The hall was lined with seats, and the walls were lined with musical instruments.

“This must have been the place where, when Immortal Witchriver was alive, he would merrymake with his monstrous clansmen,” Youngflame Nong laughed loudly. “These tables, these pillars, and these sculptures... all of them are utterly exquisite and extraordinary.”

Ning and the others all nodded. They could completely imagine how, countless years ago, the Diremonsters would all be seated next to those tables, eating and drinking and making merry.

“And there. That’s the place where Immortal Witchriver must have sat.” Youngflame Nong pointed towards the front of the hall. The front of the hall had the most beautiful, lavish table of all, and decorative screen behind it was also exquisite. To each side of the decorative screens, there were bronze lamps.

“That bronze lamp was the core of this Witchriver Palace,” Youngflame Nong said, pointing towards a Zifu Disciple. “Go next to that bronze lamp.”

“Yes.”

These Zifu Disciples were all Deathsworn. They knew very well that they had been trained, solely for the purpose of obeying their master. If their master was to order them to their deaths, they wouldn’t hesitate at all.

As soon as the Zifu Disciple moved to walk towards the front of the hall...

BOOM!

The entire hall instantly began to change in appearance. Ning and the others watched as the scenery around them transformed into a beautiful peach tree garden. They were surrounded by peach trees, and the floor

was covered with petals.

“Careful. It is an illusory formation,” Xiangliu Fang shouted.

“I knew it. This place, the main palace, the Witchriver Palace...there’s no way we’d be able to acquire it so easily.” Youngflame Nong laughed coldly. With Uncle Fang present, he wasn’t nervous at all. This was a formation that had been in storage for countless years, and it didn’t have anyone truly controlling it; at most, this formation would be able to unleash a tenth of its power.

“Assemble into formation.” Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, and Ninelotus all immediately assembled into that five-elements, pentagonal formation. All of them were on their guard.

“This illusory formation is very formidable; even divine sense is unable to see through it,” Adept Vastriver said. “And I have a vague feeling...that this formation is even stronger than the one which had been located in the Vault of Treasures.”

“This formation seems to be gathering Azurewood Godbolts,” Ning said with a frown.

“It seems you understand a bit about formations as well.” Xiangliu Fang, standing next to Youngflame Nong, gave Ning a glance, then said calmly, “This formation activates the power of the Solar Star. Using wood to guide the power, it generates Azurewood Godbolts. Although no one is controlling it, you still can’t underestimate the power of the Azurewood Godbolts. I need some time to break this formation; I wish all of you the best during this time.”

Ning and the rest of the five moved closer to each other, prepared to deal with the Azurewood Godbolts at any moment. They didn’t dare to run about wildly; to do so in this illusory world was to seek death.

“I, I, what should I do?” Xue Hongyi was panicking internally, but on the surface, he continued to grit his teeth and wait.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Suddenly, three bolts of azure lightning thundered down from up above,



smashing directly towards Youngflame Nong.

“Someone is commanding the formation?” Xiangliu Fang was shocked.

“How could someone be commanding it?” The nearby Youngflame Nong was panicked as well.

Whoosh! Xiangliu Fang stretched his large hands out. His hands were like dark clouds capable of covering the skies and smothering the sun; they stretched out to those three bolts of lightning. Boom, boom, boom... the lightning struck against the giant hands, and although the giant hands sank down momentarily, and the skin on the hands split apart as lightning writhed and spat against them, the hands endured.

“Hahaha, young master, don’t worry.” While receiving the lightning bolts, Xiangliu Fang actually began to laugh loudly. “Immortal Witchriver died countless hundreds of millions of years ago; the Witchriver Palace definitely has no living creatures within it. Anything still surviving should be a golem. Generally speaking, golems only possess a simple level of intelligence; at most, they can activate formations. They aren’t able to control them. After all, this sort of large formation is quite complicated. Without Immortal Witchriver passing down the the special technique to control it, there is no way they will be able to do so.

“If my guess is correct, the Witchriver Palace should have a powerful golem within it, and this golem should have a sentient spirit animating it. Thus, this golem is extremely intelligent, and is thus also skilled in controlling formations. Immortal Witchriver must have trusted him so much that he transmitted the formation control method to him,” Xiangliu Fang laughed. “But unfortunately, he is still merely a golem, with no elemental ki within his body; at most, he is capable of unleashing twenty to thirty percent of the power of the formation.”

As Xiangliu Fang was speaking loudly, one bolt of thunder after another continued to come crashing down from the skies. Xiangliu Fang, by himself, received all of these blows.

Ning and the others let out sighs of relief. Xiangliu Fang’s guess was most likely accurate; to truly control a formation required the usage of

elemental ki. If the ki was that of an Immortal, then the power of the formation would naturally increase greatly. But golems didn't have any ki at all; even if they were able to control the formation, they would only be able to, at most, increase its power by a small amount.

"Humans, you are not the Immortal's heirs. To barge into the Witchriver Palace is a capital offense." A furious shout rang out from within the illusion of a peach garden.

"A capital offense? Who is going to carry out the penalty, you? If my guess is correct, you are at most comparable to an ordinary Loose Immortal in strength," Xiangliu Fang laughed coldly. "Your power is far from being a match for mine."

As soon as his words came out, Xiangliu Fang suddenly let out a savage howl. "BREAK!" Instantly, Xiangliu Fang's hands swung outward, howling out as the fingers on his large hands all transformed into giant serpents. The ten giant serpents instantly latched onto something in the void and gave it a hard pull. The entire formation immediately seemed to have been 'stuck', and the peach blossom formation trembled, grew blurry, and completely vanished.

"How can this be?!" An astonished cry.

With the disappearance of the peach blossom, Ning's group once more was able to see the giant hall, and the tables within it.

"Not bad, not bad. I managed to survive. Fortunately, that golem was extremely intelligent and knew that it had to kill Youngflame Nong, and so it focused all of its efforts on him. If those lightning bolts had struck amongst the rest of us, although those five of the Black-White College would probably be able to endure it, I would have been in danger." Xue Hongyi felt as though he had been blessed with tremendous luck.

Last time, when he and Adept Bu You had faced those attacks from the golems, Adept Bu You had died, while he had been lucky and survived. He had then acquired an Immortal-ranked magic treasure, and just now avoided yet another tribulation. He had survived multiple dangerous encounters, and had even acquired an Immortal-ranked treasure. Wasn't

this a tremendous blessing of luck?

“The formation is already broken.” Xiangliu Fang swept the hall with his gaze, then said calmly, “Everyone, no need to be afraid. Immortal Witchriver was only a Celestial Immortal, and his roots were not very deep; it is already quite impressive for him to have produced a golem that is fairly close to a Loose Immortal in power. If that golem doesn’t appear, then fine; if he does, however, I’ll capture him.”

Youngflame Nong laughed and nodded, then instructed, “There are golems lying in wait within the Witchriver Palace. Everyone, don’t run around rashly; if you run into those golems, Uncle Fang won’t be able to save you in time.”

“How could we dare to run about rashly? Are we suicidal?” Xue Hongyi hurriedly responded.

Ning and the others shared a glance. Clearly, an extremely powerful golem was lying in wait within the Witchriver Palace. They were no fools; naturally, they wouldn’t run about wildly within.

Xiangliu Fang and Youngflame Nong moved to the front of the main hall, beginning to bind a bronze lamp.

“Haha, this is the core of the final palace.” Youngflame Nong was utterly delighted. “After binding it, the entire Immortal estate will be under my complete control. The Witchriver Palace definitely has other dangers lurking within; however, there’s no need at all for us to go and take any risks. Once I bind the Immortal estate, the golems will naturally have lost.”

Ning and the others nodded.

“The rest of you, be careful; those golems won’t just watch and wait for me to successfully bind this palace. I imagine they will try to ambush us,” Youngflame Nong said.

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Eighteen savage, fearsome looking Qiongqi Manticore golems were looking at their leader, a black-armored, muscular man. The black-

armored man growled, "That person who broke the formation just now, he is most likely a Fiendgod. He was able to make his hands so large, and his fingers transform into giant serpents; only true Fiendgods are capable of such a thing. From the techniques he displayed, I can tell that he is more powerful than me."

"Commander, what should we do?"

"They are starting to bind the Witchriver Palace."

The Qiongqi golems were all panicking.

"I estimate he will need two hours to completely bind the Witchriver Palace," the black-armored man said in a low voice. "We need to come up with a method...and we need to succeed in one try. We need to kill the humans that Fiendgod is protecting. From the conversation between those humans when they first arrived, that human should have already bound the other four palaces. This is the last one."

"Prepare to obey my orders." The black-armored man's cold, dark eyes flashed with a freezing light.

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A group of Zifu Disciples were scattered in the surrounding area. Ji Ning, Ninelotus, Adept Vastriver, Xue Hongyi, and the others were all waiting vigilantly, worried that the golem might suddenly attack.

Youngflame Nong, seated high above at the front of the hall and binding that bronze lamp, seeing how nervous everyone in the hall was, couldn't help but frown. He barked, "No need to be so nervous. It's just a few golems. If one comes, Uncle Fang will capture one. They will definitely lose."

Ji Ning and the others, including Xue Hongyi, silently tightened their lips. Yes, Xiangliu Fang could defeat all comers. But the most powerful of those golems had the combat strength of an ordinary Loose Immortal; if golems of such power were to suddenly attack and catch this group off guard, some of them might die. They were not protected by Xiangliu Fang, after all.

“Attend me.” Youngflame Nong, seeing how Ning and the others remained vigilant, couldn’t help but frown and bark, “Prepare a celebratory banquet.”

Very soon, the two Zifu Disciple maidservants who personally served Youngflame Nong had prepared a banquet of fine wine. Actually, during the two day journey on the warship from Serpentwing Lake of Swallow Mountain to the Immortal estate, they had often drank and enjoyed themselves, and so the fine wine had been prepared long ago. Very soon, the table became filled with wine, spirit-fruit, and delicacies.

Youngflame Nong sat down in the lotus position, laughing loudly as he scooped up a goblet of wine. He only needed to use up a small amount of his attention on binding the bronze lamp. “Everyone, no need to worry. The outer perimeter will be handled by my Zifu Deathsworn; even if golems attack, they’ll be the first ones engaged, giving you enough time to react and fight back.”

“Sit, all of you,” Youngflame Nong called out. Seeing Ning and the others continue to hesitate, he couldn’t help but snap, “I told you all to sit!”

Ning and the others exchanged a glance. They had no choice but to sit down.

“That’s more like it.”

Youngflame Nong laughed, “You’ve all accompanied me into this Witchriver Immortal Estate and engaged repeated dangers with me. You’ve rendered quite a few merits. However, this is the final moment; after I bind this bronze lamp, the task shall be complete. Although a few golems continue to resist, they aren’t much to be worried about. Come, let us toast each other for the treasures we have gained, and for my successful binding of the Witchriver Immortal Estate.” After speaking, Youngflame Nong lifted up his bronze wineglass, etched with a tattoo of flames.

## Chapter 22: Youngflame Nong's True Face

"Let us down this cup together," Xue Hongyi hurriedly called out. He wanted to flatter Youngflame Nong as best as he could, because in his heart, he was still thinking about later leaving the Witchriver Immortal Estate, then fleeing alive with the Immortal-ranked magic item in tow!

"My fellow disciples, we must be vigilant against the outsiders. Let's not drink this wine," Adept Vastriver sent mentally.

"We were useful to him earlier, but now we are useless; who knows what sort of tricks he might play," Northson sent as well.

But Ninelotus said, "I imagine he wouldn't dare to be so heartless and crazed."

While sending mental messages amongst themselves, they all lifted up their cups and drank from it.

"Gulp." The wine entered Ji Ning's mouth, then a surge of elemental ki surrounded the liquid. The liquid was completely vaporized by a streak of fire. Only then did Ning put down his winecup.

"Chun and Ji, the two of you, perform a dance and help us enjoy ourselves." Youngflame Nong was in an extremely fine mood as he gave the orders. Instantly, two of the female Zifu Disciples behind him moved. Previously, their robes were in the shape of maid robes, but the robes now changed. Their sleeves fluttered as the two of them laughed, unveiling their astonishing charisma as the two of them began to dance gracefully in the center of the palace hall.

Strum. Clink. Three other nearby Zifu Disciples who were musicians moved to those ancient musical instruments in the hall, then in a very practiced manner, began to drum and strum. Although countless years had passed, the instruments were completely undamaged, as they were all magical treasures.

One melody rang out after another, while the beautiful courtesans danced. Youngflame Nong was absolutely delighted with himself as he

watched and drank, and Ning and the others all accompanied him.

His spirits having grown increasingly high as he drank, Youngflame Nong suddenly glanced sideways at the truly peerless, fairy-like beauty, 'Yu Wei'. In terms of appearance and aura, even he, Youngflame Nong, who had seen reincarnated fairy-like maidens in the capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty, felt her to be astonishing. His throat went a little dry, and his heart began to grow heated. The desire he had held down this entire time was beginning to rise.

Still, he knew quite well that this Rainbowflame Fairy would probably be hard to convince. Thus, he then looked towards Ninelotus, then laughed, "Little Sister Ninelotus, now that I have completed my task, we need to have a good celebration. Little Sister Ninelotus, why don't you perform a dance to us and help us celebrate?"

"Eh?" Ning frowned, his face growing somewhat unsightly. 'Little Sister' Ninelotus? This was not a form of address for Youngflame Nong to use. And he wanted Ninelotus to dance? How could Ning not feel angry?

"This Youngflame Nong is going too far," Little Qing sent through the spirit-link. "Master, this Youngflame Nong holds you in no regard at all; he knows that you are Ninelotus are Dao-Companions, but he still acts in such a way." Indeed, all of the others present in the hall were stunned.

Ninelotus was astonished as well. She first gave Ning a glance, then said hurriedly, "Young master Youngflame, I have no talent in dance. Compared with the beautiful courtesans you have by your side, I am far inferior; I'd rather not go up and embarrass myself."

"How can they compare with you, Little Sister Ninelotus?" Youngflame Nong laughed, "What, aren't you even going to give me, Youngflame Nong, even this tiny bit of face?"

Ninelotus hesitated a moment, then put a smile on her face. "Then I'll go up and dance to a song." At the same time, she gave Ning a glance.

Ning just sat there, an ugly look on his face. It was just a dance. With so many fellow disciples present, it wasn't appropriate for Ning to grow angry.

“Ning, son, be careful,” the Whitewater Hound sent spiritually. “Inviting her to dance as part of the victory celebrations is a small matter. Youngflame Nong clearly knows that you and Ninelotus are Dao-Companions, but when he asked her to dance, he didn’t even look at you or say a single word to you. Clearly, he holds you in no regard at all. Given that, you need to be careful.”

Ning immediately came to his senses. “Don’t worry, Uncle White. I understand,” Ning sent back, and then turned to look at Ninelotus, who was dancing in the middle of the hall, in tune with the melodies.

As Ning watched, he suddenly realized...that Ninelotus was actually a very skilled dancer.

Truth be told, Ning knew far too little about the Dongyan clan and the other major clans. The people which future clan leaders like Ninelotus interacted with were generally some of the more formidable figures of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty, and thus she would learn a bit of this and a bit of that, so as to ensure that her performance in any event was perfect.

“Good, good, good.” Youngflame Nong laughed as he drank his wine, occasionally clapping his hands in praise.

Ninelotus was like a blooming lotus flower, swirling about throughout the hall.

But as she moved closer to Youngflame Nong, Youngflame Nong suddenly swung his arm out. A long, black whip actually swept out, coiling around Ninelotus’ arm, then tugging at her. Ninelotus, caught completely offguard, couldn’t help but be pulled even closer to Youngflame Nong. Still, Ninelotus was a Wanxiang Adept; by activating her elemental ki, she managed to stabilize herself as she was pulled closer to Youngflame Nong.

However, Youngflame Nong intimately grabbed her by the arm; he had originally actually been planning on taking her by the waist. Laughing, he pulled at Ninelotus’ arm, wanting to pull her in while saying, “Little Sister Ninelotus, come, let’s drink a cup of wine together.”

This scene shocked everyone present in the hall.



“What?!” Mu Northson, Yu Wei, and the others were all shocked. As for Xue Hongyi, he just gave Ning a sideways glance, revealing a cold smile as he took a sip of wine.

Ning felt as though his head had gone blank. Earlier, Ninelotus’ dance could have been said to be a performance for everyone, but now...

BANG!

Ning suddenly rose to his feet, smashing his hand hard against the table. This table was technically a Mortal-ranked magic treasure, but it was only used for holding wine and food; it wasn’t meant for combat. In addition, Ning was currently gripped by rage, and even his eyes had begun to turn bloodshot. This slap towards the table was actually even more powerful than the palm blows he would deliver in a life-or-death battle.

The energy wave alone from this palm blow smashed all of the plates into tiny pieces, and the fine wine and meat were utterly transformed into dust. BOOM!!! The entire table actually was split apart. Large amounts of shards went flying everywhere, and some of them actually sliced across the body of a nearby Zifu Disciple, causing blood to instantly fly everywhere.

“Hm?” Youngflame Nong immediately gave him a cold look. “What, I can’t even share a drink of wine with Little Sister Ninelotus?” As he finished speaking, a hint of anger appeared on Youngflame Nong’s face.

Youngflame Nong’s anger would’ve instantly reduced most people to a quivering pile of fear. But Ning’s eyes only reddened further. Ignoring all else, he barked out, “Youngflame Nong!”

“Ji Ning.” Ninelotus realized that Youngflame Nong’s eyes had a hint of a murderous intent in them, and she immediately barked out towards Ning.

Ning looked at Ninelotus, then said coldly, “Ninelotus, there’s no need for you to pay any heed to this young master of the Youngflame clan. Hmph. He’s not even the Godplume Duke yet! When we first followed him into the Immortal estate, he was so mild and humble. But not that we are useless to him, this is how he acts!”

“You are courting death.” Youngflame Nong’s anger was beginning to build. Previously, Ning was a useful assistant, but he was now useless. Geniuses like him...they weren’t much in the eyes of him, Youngflame Nong.

Ning said angrily, “Do you remember our original agreement? You made us promises in the name of your Youngflame clan. What, now that you have the Immortal estate, you are planning to act against us? Are you feeling greedy for the treasures we acquired in the Immortal estate? You endured it then, but are now planning to act against us?”

“Be silent!” Ninelotus cried out.

“Ninelotus.” Ning was utterly infuriated.

“Sit down!” Ninelotus shouted at him, while also sending him a frantic mental message. “Ji Ning, you are too rash. Think about Youngflame Nong’s status. He’s normally in the imperial capital, and when together with the imperial princes and various young dukelings, they often act in dissolute, wanton ways. I just have to deal with it and drink a few cups of wine with him, and this matter will be at an end. If you let anger cloud your mind, then it will be trouble.”

Ning sent back, “Some things, I can endure, but others, I cannot. Ninelotus...”

“Are you trying to get yourself killed? You want to fight him?!”  
Ninelotus sent furiously, “Don’t be so immature!”

Ning was stunned.

Immature?

Youngflame Nong was naturally watching the mental argument between Ninelotus and Ning.

“It seems as though this young and famous Ji Ning doesn’t live up to his reputation,” Youngflame Nong sent mentally to the Fiendgod by his side, Xiangliu Fang. “A scene like this has already angered him to the point of insanity. To deal with him would be simplicity itself. For now, however, there’s no rush to deal with him; if I kill him within the Immortal estate,

once the news of it is spread out by the Dongyan clan, the other large tribes will all think of me, Youngflame Nong, as a narrow-minded man.”

“Right.” Xiangliu Fang concurred.

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Ninelotus’ words had truly enraged Ning now.

Who was Ninelotus? She was the next leader of the Dongyan clan! There was absolutely no need for her to compromise in such a manner; since there was no need, why did she do so?

“Young master Youngflame, Ji Ning is still young; please pardon him.” Ninelotus smiled towards Youngflame Nong.

Youngflame Nong didn’t continue with his earlier actions. He could tell that if he went just a bit farther, this Ji Ning probably would actually start to a fight to the death against him. He dared to kill Ji Ning, but Ninelotus? Ninelotus was the next leader of the Dongyan clan. If he killed her, he would be in serious trouble.

Ninelotus quickly returned to Ning’s side and sat down. Ning remained seated in the lotus position on his chair. Zifu Disciple servants removed the shattered magic treasure table in front of him, replacing it with a new one.

“Ji Ning.” As soon as Ninelotus returned to her seat, she immediately spoke mentally to Ning. “Calm down.”

“Oh, so you know I’m pissed?” Ning looked towards Ninelotus.

“This really was nothing. This was a small matter. If in the future, you were to see how the young masters of the major clans act when they are together, you’ll understand that this sort of minor flirtation...it really means nothing. Generally speaking, everyone has a bottom line that they won’t cross; to engage in a little playing around is nothing,” Ninelotus sent. “You’ve seen too little, which is why you were so easily enraged. Look over there; after drinking a cup of wine, Youngflame Nong is no longer harping on this matter.”

“I’ve seen too little?” Ning sent back with a shout, “Bottom line? Ninelotus, you are my Dao-Companion. This so-called ‘a little playing around’ of yours, being embraced by others men, being teased by them, drinking with them...these things have already gone beyond my bottom line. Do you understand?”

“You...how can you act this way?” Ninelotus was furious as well.

“That’s the way I am. Can it be that you didn’t know?” Ning stared at her.

Ninelotus and Ning’s gazes intersected. She could sense the determination and resolve from Ning’s eyes.

“Fine. I won’t be act like this in the future.” Ninelotus lowered her head.

Ning lowered his head as well, beginning to drink. Although Ninelotus had bowed her head to him, Ning still felt as though there were thorns stuck in his heart. Just now, he truly hoped that Ninelotus would directly refuse Youngflame Nong. Even if she didn’t throw the cup of wine into Youngflame Nong’s face, she had to at least turn and immediately leave.

In this recent period of time, the two had already argued twice due to differences in the way they behaved towards others. This time, their fight was due to the fact that they handled matters and conducted themselves in completely different ways.

“Heh. Heh. Heh heh.” Youngflame Nong, seated at the front of the hall, was able to tell that there was some unhappiness between Ji Ning and Ninelotus. He actually laughed...and then his gaze fell towards the nearby Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei. The flames in his heart blazed even hotter. The desire he felt towards Yu Wei was far stronger than the desire he felt towards Ninelotus.

# Chapter 23: Windwing Evasion

Quite a few thoughts were going through Youngflame Nong's mind. At the same time, the other members of the Black-White College began to console Ji Ning.

"Junior apprentice-brother, endure it," Adept Vastriver sent to Ning. "After we leave the Witchriver Immortal Estate, you won't have to stay here and swallow Youngflame Nong's attitude."

"Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning," Yu Wei sent, worried, "We aren't able to beat Youngflame Nong right now. However, truly powerful Immortal cultivators rely on themselves; no matter what how impressive he might be, in the future, Youngflame Nong will only be the Godplume Duke, whereas the real powers behind the Youngflame clan are those old fellows who have lived for countless years. When you train to the Celestial Immortal level in the future, the Youngflame clan will treat you with courtesy, not daring to slacken off in the slightest. What would a Godplume Duke be to you? He's nothing more than a titular leader."

Ning gave Yu Wei a look. He had met with the Lord of Cui Manor and Granny Meng, and had watched as a great power had assaulted the Six Paths of Reincarnation! His master, Daoist Threelives, was one of the most incredible figures of the Three Realms...it really was as she had said; personal strength was the truest foundation to power.

If Ning were to also become a major power of the Three Realms, what would a mere Youngflame clan, one of the clans subordinate to the Grand Xia Dynasty's major world, be to him? There were three thousand major worlds!

As long as he was able to reach the Celestial Immortal level, the Youngflame clan would be respectful to him. After all, it was rare for there to be even a single Celestial Immortal for every ten thousand Loose Immortals. Celestial Immortals were true Immortals, who had escaped the binds of the Three Realms and lived carefree lives.

"Senior apprentice-brother," Northson sent to him, "If you aren't happy

with senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus, then as I see it, you should just break up. I mean, I'm just saying...it's up to you, and how you really feel. You need to ask yourself if you truly want for senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus to be your Dao-Companion."

Ning gave Northson a glance. "Junior apprentice-brother, no need to say anything further."

In his heart...Ning truly did like Ninelotus. In his past life and in this life, Ning had never been in a romantic relationship. He couldn't quite explain how he felt towards her, but he truly did feel a hazy liking for her. However, these recent arguments had caused Ning to truly feel upset!

"Glugglugglug." Ning held his cup, constantly drinking wine. Although he downed one cup after another, all of the wine continued to be burnt away by flames after it entered his body.

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Ninelotus sat there in the lotus position, staring at the constantly drinking Ning.

"It seems Ji Ning is really angry." Ninelotus felt frustrated as well. "How can Ji Ning act like this. I lowered my head to him, and this wasn't even a big deal to begin with. This sort of thing is too common; I just had to deal with it in a casual, superficial manner. Why does he have to be so angry about it? If he gets angry at this and angry at that...in the future, after I become the leader of the Dongyan clan, am I supposed to follow his every wish and desire?"

"I'll let him calm down and sober up first. He should understand, later."

One had been held up high since childhood, and had been chosen to be the next leader of a major clan.

The other came from a world of peace in his past life, and was a genius who had been born into a backwater clan in this life.

The two of them attracted each other. When they had been in the secluded peach-garden utopia of Serpentwing Lake, there had been no problems, but once they truly began to face worldly affairs together, their

disagreements had begun to constantly worsen.

.....

Ning and Ninelotus were both feeling rather frustrated in their hearts.

Suddenly...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

A figure carrying a terrifying, tremendous force came charging in. Those Zifu Deathsworn that had been stationed in the outer perimeter instantly blew apart, their bodies being knocked flying and blood spraying everywhere. In the blink of an eye, the entire hall was transformed into an asura's hell, the floor stained with blood and chunks of meat.

"The golem." Youngflame Nong, seated at the front of the hall, was greatly surprised, but then he immediately grew excited and eager.

One golem after another charged in. As for Ji Ning and the others, as they had been assigned to sit down at various locations in the table, they weren't able to assemble into formation.

"That dogshit Youngflame Nong...he said that those Zifu Deathsworn would be able to hold on for a few moments, but in reality, they weren't able to do so at all." Ning's Darknorth Swords appeared in his hands as he hurriedly blocked the Qiongqi Manticore golem which was pouncing towards him.

BOOM!

Ning's sword-light flashed out, crashing against the body of the Qiongqi golem and sending it flying away.

"Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, protect junior apprentice-brother Mu Northson," Adept Vastriver sent.

"I know, don't worry," Ning said hurriedly.

This hall was simply too large. Ning's group had been divided into two rows that sat on each end of the table. Ninelotus, Vastriver, and Yu Wei were on the side opposite to Ning, and were quite far from each other as well. As for Ning, Northson, and Xue Hongyi, they were on the same side.

Right now, six Qiongqi golems were throwing themselves against Ning and the rest of the six Wanxiang Adepts. Even more of the golems were charging towards Youngflame Nong!

It was very easy for Ning to handle a single Qiongqi golem, but clearly it was a bit difficult for Northson; Northson was more talented in controlling golems, not at close combat.

Swoosh. A pair of black wings appeared on Ning's back, and the wings fluttered as he began to execute the Windwing Evasion, howling through the air as he moved next to Northson. His sword-light flashed out, striking against a Primal-level Qiongqi golem and sending it flying.

"Thank you, senior apprentice-brother." Northson was covered with cold sweat, and he hurriedly controlled a giant silver serpent construct, sending it into battle.

"It's nothing." Ning laughed, twin swords in hands, and then lotus petals began to bloom around him, easily blocking those two Qiongqi golems.

.....

Ning and the others, including Xue Hongyi, were each dealing with a single Qiongqi golem. In truth, these six golems weren't meant to kill them; they were assigned to keep them tied down. The other twelve Qiongqi golems and their black-armored leader simultaneously charged towards Youngflame Nong.

"Hahaha..." Youngflame Nong laughed loudly. "Capture them."

Xiangliu Fang's twin hands struck out, and those massive hands seemed to cover the skies as they did so. His fingers transformed into massive serpents, which seemed to coil about as they moved to wrap around the Qiongqi golems. In fact, some of them managed to snare two Qiongqi golems each. All twelve of them were actually seized by his giant hands... but the black-armored man pulled out a longsword from within his leg with his right arm, hacking it directly against Xiangliu Fang's hands.

BOOM!

The surrounding area was filled with a deafening explosion. Actually, it



was quite taxing for Xiangliu Fang to rely on nothing but a pair of hands to capture those twelve Qiongqi golems. The power of this sword attack was even more tremendous. His hands trembled and were knocked aside, allowing the Qiongqi golems to all escape their captor.

“Eh?” Xiangliu Fang was shocked. “This sword of yours...”

CHOP. The black-armored man transformed into a streak of light, charging forwards and slamming the sword down towards Xiangliu Fang once more.

Right at this moment, the other twelve Qiongqi golems howled through the air, flying towards Youngflame Nong. Youngflame Nong frowned, and instantly that enormous Redscale Salamander appeared around him. At the same time, a leaf-like Dao-seal appeared in his hand.

“They are rather irritating.” Youngflame Nong muttered softly, but he felt completely confident; he had Uncle Fang, the Redscale Salamander, and a protective treasure; he was definitely going to win.

“Growl...”

The Redscale Salamander howled with rage as it fought against the Qiongqi golems. But suddenly, a Qiongqi golem reached out to snatch the nearby bronze lamp, then began to run away with it!

“The bronze lamp!” Youngflame Nong was shocked. Now, he understood. These golems weren’t meant to kill him; they knew that they weren’t strong enough to do that. Thus, their real target was the bronze lamp. To bind a treasure, one had to be right next to it and slowly use one’s elemental ki to bind it. If one was a bit too far away, or if someone else took possession of it, then there would be no way for one to fill it with elemental ki. Naturally, then, there would be no way to bind it.

This would result in it taking forever for him to control the Immortal estate. Given how well these golems knew the Witchriver Palace, they could simply play hide-and-seek with him within it. The golems could delay for thousands of years...but he could not.

“Quick, seize the bronze lamp,” Youngflame Nong howled furiously..

Xiangliu Fang immediately let out an astonishing howl as well. His right arm suddenly split apart and flew out from his body. His severed right arm blasted out with a sky-filling black-colored divine power, which rippled forth, then transformed the right arm into a new Xiangliu Fang. As for the original Xiangliu Fang, he grew out a new arm.

In the blink of an eye, two Xiangliu Fang's had appeared within the main hall. However, by the time this splitting process had completed, that Qiongqi golem had already charged out of the main hall; after all, Primal-level Qiongqi golems were indeed as fast as lightning.

One Xiangliu Fang remained in combat against the black-armored man. The other, however, went chasing after the Qiongqi golem that had fled with the bronze lamp. With a swoosh, he charged into the corridor, continuing his pursuit.

"Two Xiangliu Fang's? A clone?" Ning and the others were all shocked.

"The bronze lamp, the bronze lamp! Damn them, damn them!" Youngflame Nong bellowed with rage. But right at this moment, at a distant corridor within the hall, Xiangliu Fang suddenly reappeared, bronze lamp in one hand, sack in the other.

"Haha." Youngflame Nong instantly laughed.

As for the black-armored man, he immediately felt disappointed. He knew that the difference in power between himself and these invading humans was simply too great; thus, he had hoped to catch them offguard and seize the bronze lamp. Unfortunately, this Fiendgod was truly too powerful; the Fiendgod was able to tie him down with one body, then use another one to chase after the Qiongqi golem and bring the bronze lamp back.

"The overall situation has been cast in stone." Youngflame Nong immediately felt completely relaxed, watching the battle going on in the rest of the hall with leisure. But as he did so, his face suddenly changed.

He was looking at Ning and Northson, located far away from him. Ning was wielding two Darknorth Swords, and on his back was a pair of black wings; he was effortlessly blocking two Qiongqi golems.

“Wings?” Youngflame Nong carefully watched the way in which Ning moved. At the same time, he sent mentally to Xiangliu Fang, “Uncle Fang, look at Ji Ning.”

Xiangliu Fang’s two bodies had merged into one again. Fighting at full power once more, Xiangliu Fang stuffed the black-armored man into his sack. Upon hearing Youngflame Nong’s words, he immediately turned to look. Upon doing so, his face changed as well.

“Uncle Fang, that’s the Windwing Evasion. I’m not mistaken, am I?” Youngflame Nong asked.

Windwing Evasion.

Youngflame Nong himself had never trained in it, but he had watched his clansmen train in it repeatedly. Because of how often he had seen it, and because he had personally read the contents of the [Windwing Evasion] manual, he could see traces of it in the way Ning moved.

“Right. That’s the Windwing Evasion. I’ve trained in it before. Although Ji Ning is using wings to mask it, he is definitely using the Windwing Evasion,” Xiangliu Fang sent mentally. “In the past, the descendants of the Yuchi clan also used wings to hide it; Ji Ning is using the same old trick. Although this is a rather clumsy method, unless one has an extremely deep understanding of the Windwing Evasion, there’s no way one would be able to tell.”

Youngflame Nong sent mentally, “Uncle Fang, how could Ji Ning know the Windwing Evasion?”

“It should be one of the surviving spawns of the Yuchi clan!” Xiangliu Fang sent back.

# Chapter 24: Enmity Born From Genocide

“Surviving spawns of the Yuchi clan?” Youngflame Nong began to feel a killing intent in his heart. “Not a single member of the Yuchi clan is to be spared, and those members of the Yuchi clan who have trained in the Windwing Evasion are all the more deserving of death. The Windwing Evasion...only my Youngflame clan can have it. It cannot be learned by others!”

The secret arts and divine abilities which were unique to a certain major clan were absolutely forbidden to be taught to others. Any outsiders who learned these techniques would suffer pursuit and assault!

“Uncle Fang, let’s deal with these golems first.” Youngflame Nong had no desire to play around anymore at all. For the first time, he truly had the desire to kill Ji Ning.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Xiangliu Fang’s two large hands swished through the air, snatching away at the Qiongqi golems with abandon while shouting, “Everyone, stop these Qiongqi golems. Don’t let them escape; if they escape, they’ll cause problems in the future.” While saying this, he continually captured Qiongqi golems and stuffed them into his sack.

Everyone did their best to stop the Qiongqi golems from escaping, allowing Xiangliu Fang to capture them, one by one.

“They really were suicidal.” The black wings on Ning’s back disappeared. He gave a glance to the bloodstained corpses on the ground. Although those Zifu Disciples were all Deathsworn and were able to assemble into formation...the difference between them and golems at the Primal level of power was simply too vast. The first wave of assaults from the Qiongqi Manticore golems had caused virtually all of the Zifu Disciples to be wiped out, leaving behind only ten or so.

“How pitiable. They were Zifu Disciples...but against these golems, they were completely useless. And yet, Youngflame Nong insisted on having them watch the perimeter; clearly, he didn’t give a damn about them

dying,” Mu Northson sent with a mental sigh. “Youngflame Nong truly is cold-blooded.”

These Deathsworn had been voluntarily gifted by Northmont Yin and some others. To Youngflame Nong, however, these Deathsworn had been raised by outside clans, and there was no way the Youngflame clan would truly trust them. There was no point to him bringing him back! And yet, he couldn't just 'return' them back to Northmont Yin. Thus, he might as well let them die. If some were lucky enough to survive, then that meant that they had been blessed with good fortune and might be worthy of bringing back to the clan and training.

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The few lucky Zifu Disciple survivors hurriedly began to clean the hall, completely removing all of the corpses and bloodstains and restoring it to a pristine condition.

Youngflame Nong reseated himself at the front of the hall. His gaze cold, he stared directly at Ning, then barked, “Ji Ning!”

Everyone in the hall was stunned.

Northson, Yu Wei, Ninelotus, Adept Vastriver, and Xue Hongyi were all astonished; they could sense that there was a terrifying look in Youngflame Nong's eyes, and the cold, tyrannical way he had just shouted was something they could all sense. Not even earlier, when Ning had shattered the table, had Youngflame Nong been so formal and cold.

“Young master Youngflame.” Ning looked towards Youngflame Nong. “What is it? Speak..”

“Youngflame Nong.” This time, it was Ninelotus, seated on the other side, who grew angry. “Ji Ning is my Dao-Companion. Earlier, he offended you, but that was just a minor matter. For you to act this way...you are being a bit too narrow-minded.”

Although these young masters and princes of major clans often chatted and teased each other, there were some bottom lines that could not be crossed. Ji Ning was her Dao-Companion, after all, and he had also

helped Youngflame Nong this time. It was one thing for the two of them to have had a bit of friction earlier, but for Youngflame Nong to act this way now was going too far.

“Ninelotus, you’ll understand after hearing what I say,” Youngflame Nong said coldly.

“Then I shall listen attentively,” Ninelotus said with cold anger as well.

“Ji Ning, I ask you this.” Youngflame Nong looked at Ning. “Just now, was the divine ability you displayed the Windwing Evasion?”

Ning was stunned.

Windwing Evasion? How did Youngflame Nong know about the Windwing Evasion? Ning’s mother’s clan, the Yuchi clan, had been almost completely obliterated; most likely, the only remaining member was Ning’s uncle’s daughter, and Ning didn’t even know if she was still alive. Ning could be somewhat considered a descendant of the Yuchi clan...but the Yuchi clan was extremely secretive about the Windwing Evasion to begin with.

“No need to deny it. You used the Windwing Evasion,” Youngflame Nong said with a cold laugh. “Uncle Fang, display it for him.”

Whoosh.

Xiangliu Fang suddenly disappeared from Youngflame Nong’s side. He seemed to have transformed into a giant Roc, instantly appearing in the center of the main hall. Then, with another movement, he retreated and returned to Youngflame Nong’s side.

Ning, seeing this, felt his heart tremble. His other fellow disciples of the Black-White College couldn’t tell, but he himself, as a practitioner of the Windwing Evasion, could - Xiangliu Fang truly was using the Windwing Evasion! In addition, it was even more precise and profound than Ning’s own usage! But this made sense; after all, Ning was only a Fiendgod Body Refiner; compared to Xiangliu Fang, a true Fiendgod, he was still far inferior.

“They are the culprits!”

“They are the ones who annihilated my clan!”

A thought suddenly entered Ning’s mind. “Can it be that it was the Youngflame clan which annihilated my mother’s Yuchi clan? Can it be that the grandparents and aunts and uncles who I never met were all slain by the Youngflame clan?”

“Well?” Youngflame Nong looked at Ning. “Is it the same as yours?”

“I do indeed train in the Windwing Evasion.” Ning knew that there was no point in lying. Frowning, he said, “But so what if it is?”

Ninelotus, Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, and Northson all stood there, watching nervously but not rushing to speak.

Youngflame Nong laughed loudly, “The Windwing Evasion technique was originally unique to the Yuchi clan of the Eastisle Commandery of our Grand Xia Dynasty.”

Ning, hearing this, felt his heart shake.

“The Yuchi clan had possessed this divine ability for a long, long time; however, they relied on using wing-type magic treasures to hide it. Our Youngflame clan, however, found out about it long ago. After preparing for an extremely long period of time, we annihilated the entire Yuchi clan in one blow...but were unable to find the original manual of the [Windwing Evasion]! Some of the powerful Immortals of my Youngflame clan personally intervene and used a soul-scour technique to collect enough memories from members of the Yuchi clan to completely rebuild the [Windwing Evasion] manual from scratch.” Youngflame Nong looked at Ning. “Right now, the [Windwing Evasion] is unique to my Youngflame clan, and it is absolutely forbidden to teach it to others. For you to learn the Windwing Evasion without the permission of my Youngflame clan... this, in and of itself, merits the death penalty for you. What’s more, I suspect that you are one of the surviving spawn of the Yuchi clan!”

“SPEAK! Are you a surviving spawn of the Yuchi clan?” Youngflame Nong stared at Ning.

Everyone else now completely understood. So this was what it was all

about! Warfare between clans...there was no real right or wrong in inter-clan warfare! Since the Youngflame clan had annihilated the Yuchi clan, and the Yuchi clan's Windwing Evasion technique was now solely possessed by the Youngflame clan...from the Youngflame clan's standpoint, it was true that all descendants of the Yuchi clan had to be annihilated. After all, between the two clans, there was now a grudge that stemmed from clan genocide.

"Ji Ning." Ninelotus sent to Ning, saying frantically, "No matter what, don't admit that you are a descendant of the Yuchi clan. If you admit to it, given that there is hatred that stems from clan genocide between you and the Youngflame clan, the Youngflame clan will definitely not permit you to remain alive. You only need to say that you acquired the original copy of the [Windwing Evasion] manual through happenstance, and that without knowing the full backstory, you learned it. Thus, since you didn't know it was forbidden to learn it, you cannot be blamed. I will have my Dongyan clan engage in negotiation with the Youngflame clan on your behalf, and this matter will quickly come to an end."

Ning looked towards Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang. His heart was filled with boundless rage. The Immortals of the Youngflame clan had soul-scoured the souls of many Yuchi clansmen in order to remake a complete Windwing Evasion.

Upon being soul-scoured, one's soul would generally be dispersed and destroyed.

"Damn. Damn. Damn!" Ning truly wanted to take revenge for his mother's entire clan.

"Are you the surviving spawn of the Yuchi clan?" Youngflame Nong stared at Ning, his murderous intent billowing to the heavens. Previously, during the banquet, he had just been flirting a bit with Ninelotus; he hadn't truly felt any desire to kill Ning. After all, he had to protect the Youngflame clan's face and reputation. However, if Ning truly was a spawn of the Yuchi clan, then even the patriarchs of the Youngflame clan were present, they would still mercilessly kill Ning.



In this moment, he was the representative of the entire Youngflame clan!

“I am not.” Ning stared at Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang. He forcibly repressed his anger and said in a low voice, “Youngflame Nong, if you want to kill me, there’s no need for you to put on such a show to find an excuse.”

“My senior apprentice-brother has already spoken; there is no relationship between himself and the Yuchi clan,” Northson said angrily. “Young master Youngflame, we came here to help you; is this how you are going to treat us?”

“Young master Youngflame, since my junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning has said that he is not a descendant of the Yuchi clan, that means he is not. He most likely acquired this divine ability through a fortuitous encounter. He can negotiate with your Youngflame clan and offer some compensatory gifts, then swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens that he absolutely will not pass this divine ability out to anyone else,” Adept Vastriver said.

Yu Wei spoke out as well. “Young master Youngflame, for you to claim at a time like this that junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning is a descendant of the Yuchi clan...once word of this spreads, people will think that it is you, Youngflame Nong, who intentionally sought out an excuse to act against him.”

“Youngflame Nong.” Ninelotus stared at Youngflame Nong as well. Filled with wrath, she said, “Ji Ning is my Dao-Companion!”

Everyone was standing out, pressuring Youngflame Nong from all sides. But he only laughed.

“Hahaha...don’t worry,” Youngflame Nong said with a laugh. “Since Ji Ning has accompanied me on this trip through the Immortal estate, I’ll give him a chance to live.” As he spoke out, he produced a set of black manacles, covered with ancient golden runes. He tossed the manacles directly towards Ning. Clank. They landed on the ground before him.

“These are godlock chains.” Youngflame Nong looked towards Ning.

“Upon being manacled, you’ll be like an ordinary mortal. Even Fiendgods, when locked by these chains, won’t be able to resist. Put these chains on and wait for my orders. I can swear an oath as well; so long as you are not a spawn of the Yuchi clan, I absolutely will not kill you, nor harm your power. I will go out and engage in an investigation. If, however, I can verify that you are a spawn of the Yuchi clan, I will kill you. If you are not? I’ll release you to your freedom.”

Ning furrowed his brows.

Yu Wei spoke out in a high voice, “Young master Youngflame, think about how powerful your Youngflame clan is; is it necessary for you to act in such a petty manner? You can let junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning go free for now, then engage in your investigations; upon verifying the results, you can act against him later. Can it be that in the face of the power of your Youngflame clan, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning would be able to escape your reach?”

“Ji Ning, do you agree or not?” Youngflame Nong looked at Ning. “I’ve given you your only way out.”

Ning stared at Youngflame Nong. “You want me to chain myself and hand over my life to you? Do you think this is possible?”

Youngflame Nong’s face instantly turned even colder and more sinister.

No matter what, Ning would not voluntarily put the godlock chains around himself. But right at this moment...

“Young master Youngflame!” The nearby Xue Hongyi suddenly laughed coldly as he pointed at Ning. “Don’t listen to his lies. This Ji Ning’s father was known as Ji Yichuan, while his mother was known as Yuchi Snow!”

“You learned the Windwing Evasion, and your mother was Yuchi Snow?” Youngflame Nong instantly revealed a savage look on his face, and his voice became as cold as ice. “So you truly are the spawn of the Yuchi clan! Die! Ji Ning shall die! Anyone who attempts to block the path of the Youngflame clan in doing so will be killed, without reservation!”

# Chapter 25: Grand Dao Domain

Everyone close to Ji Ning, such as Mu Northson and Ninelotus, all knew that Ning's mother was named Yuchi Snow. However, they all wanted to try and buy him some time; at the very least, they wanted to make sure that could leave this major world alive. Later on, the Dongyan clan and the Black-White College could use some methods at their disposal to ensure that Ning could be sent and escape to other lesser worlds, or perhaps even a different major world.

Unfortunately...

Xue Hongyi had thoroughly investigated Ning long ago, and had even purchased a set of intelligence reports regarding Ning from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. Naturally, he knew who Ning's parents were.

"Youngflame Nong!" Ninelotus was enraged.

"Hold!" Yu Wei's forehead suddenly began to glow with white light. Her aura quickly became terrifying as she, too, roared with fury.

Adept Vastriver and Mu Northson all called out in anger as well.

Whooooosh.

Xiangliu Fang only stretched out a single hand, which instantly expanded to a tremendous size. At the same time, his five fingers transformed into five giant serpents, each more than three hundred meters long. They stretched out towards Ninelotus, Yu Wei, Northson, and Adept Vastriver. Every single serpent emanated a terrifyingly powerful aura, causing the faces of Ninelotus and the others to become unsightly.

"Ninelotus, I won't kill you." Youngflame Nong pointed towards Ninelotus. "But those three fellow disciples of yours...Uncle Fang, if they dare interfere, just kill them."

Although he felt lust towards Yu Wei...women, to Youngflame Nong, were nothing more than playthings. Playthings, in the end, were still playthings; they could be killed at a moment's notice.

"You..."

“Youngflame Nong...”

Ninelotus, Northson, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver all stared towards him with hatred, but they knew exactly how strong Xiangliu Fang was; he was absolutely capable of crushing them. Although they had some protective items on them, those items would at most allow them to stay alive for a short period of time. To completely change the situation...was impossible.

“Senior apprentice-brother, senior apprentice-sister, junior apprentice-brother...Ninelotus.” Ning looked towards Youngflame Nong, seated at the front of the hall, then said calmly, “There’s no need for you to intervene. This is a matter between myself and Youngflame Nong.”

“Ji Ning.” Ninelotus called out frantically towards him.

Ning looked towards Ninelotus. “Don’t worry.”

“YOUNGFLAME NONG!!!” Ninelotus was absolutely livid. “You are provoking my Dongyan clan!”

“If it was the Forefather of the Dongyan clan who said these words to me, then I might truly be forced to reconsider. But you?” Youngflame Nong laughed, then shook his head.

Ninelotus suddenly produced a black lotus petal in her hand, a petal with an aura that inspired terror. The black lotus petal quickly expanded, causing Xiangliu Fang to called out icily, “Are you looking to die!?” His giant python-finger instantly smashed headlong against the black lotus flower, which trembled, then began to crack. This cracked black lotus flower continued to fly straight towards the giant serpent.

BOOM!

The giant serpent quickly froze into a statue of ice, then shattered apart. In fact, Xiangliu Fang’s entire hand became frozen, all the way to his elbow, then began to splinter across. However, Xiangliu Fang’s arm then once more grew out. WHAP. His fingers once more transformed into serpents, striking heavily against Ninelotus and causing her to be knocked flying, vomiting blood from her mouth.

“Not bad. Unfortunately, you were only capable of injuring Uncle Fang.” Youngflame Nong shook his head. “Even I am unable to produce treasures capable of killing Uncle Fang. You?”

Xiangliu Fang was of the ancient Fiendgod ‘Hydraga’ race; his life force was incredibly powerful, and his combat ability was comparable to a peak Loose Immortal’s. To kill Xiangliu Fang? This was an incredibly hard task.

“Xue Hongyi, I’ll give you a chance to render merits for yourself.” Youngflame Nong looked towards Xue Hongyi. “Go and kill Ji Ning.”

“Me? Kill Ji Ning?” Xue Hongyi was stunned.

“Are you going to kill him or not?” Youngflame Nong’s eyes flashed with a cold light.

Xue Hongyi mentally cursed nonstop. He had been flattering Youngflame Nong this entire time, and had even told him that Ning’s mother was named Yuchi Snow. He had done all of this in the hopes of making Youngflame Nong like him...but who would’ve imagined that Youngflame Nong would be this vicious? Youngflame Nong had actually ordered him to go kill Ji Ning...he had no confidence in being able to do so at all!

“Kill, yes, kill.” Xue Hongyi nodded frantically, but in his heart, he thought to himself, “I’m not going to be able to kill Ji Ning, but I should be able to stay alive at least.”

“Ji Ning, prepare to die,” Xue Hongyi called out with anger, then instantly shot out a series of flying needles towards Ning.

Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang stood there at the front of the hall, watching this happen. A look of anticipation was in Youngflame Nong’s eyes. “Xue Hongyi’s strength should be a bit weaker than Ji Ning’s; if Ji Ning really was to go all-out against him, he should be able to kill Xue Hongyi...and after Xue Hongyi dies, his Immortal-ranked magic treasure will be mine.”

“Uncle Fang, after Xue Hongyi dies, you attack and kill Ji Ning,”

Youngflame Nong sent. "The Immortal-ranked magic treasure will be mine then."

"Yes, young master," Xiangliu Fang said.

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Upon hearing Youngflame Nong say, the words, "Ji Ning shall die" and "anyone who attempts to block the path of the Youngflame clan in doing so will be killed," Ning had already made up his mind to kill Youngflame Nong!

Xiangliu Fang was far too powerful; Ning didn't feel any confidence in his ability to defeat him, but he had no choice now.

"Die." Xue Hongyi charged forward.

"First you. Then Youngflame Nong." Ning wielded his Darknorth swords in his hands. At this point, he couldn't be bothered to use wings to hide his technique.

Whoooooosh!!!

A series of flying needles filled the skies, shooting towards him.

"KILL!" Ning let out an enraged bellow. In this moment, Ning's sword-heart was more steadfast and firm than it had ever been before.

He understood now.

In this moment, he had embarked on a brand new path. If he didn't kill Youngflame Nong, then due to being physically located within this Immortal estate, he wouldn't be able to escape. He would die! But if he did kill Youngflame Nong, someone who had the highest chances to become the next Godplume Duke...the Youngflame clan would definitely pursue him with full power. This was a clan that was even more terrifyingly powerful than the Northmont clan of Stillwater!

Two roads lay ahead of him.

One was the road to death.

The other was the road of being pursued by the Youngflame clan.

After having been pressured to this extent...Ning actually became incomparably resolved.

BOOOM!!!

His soul became completely pure and transparent in this moment, more than it ever had been before. Ning suddenly felt as though time itself slowed down. Something that he had been strugglingly this entire time to reach, and yet had never been able to...finally, he truly had reached it, and embarked on a new journey through his Grand Dao. This was...the Grand Dao of the Sword! A vast, awe-inspiring Grand Dao! In this moment, Ning felt as though he had transformed into a sword that was swimming through the entirety of the Grand Dao.

In this moment...Ning had completely reached the Grand Dao Domain level.

Generally speaking, Immortal cultivators who trained in a Dao all had the chance to reach the 'Dao Domain' level, but that was generally only true for an ordinary Dao. The Dao of the Sword, however, was one of the Grand Daos; to reach the Grand Dao Domain was far more difficult than even completely mastering an entire Dao-Path. Although Ning had reached the fifth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] long ago, if he hadn't been placed under such enormous pressure this time, causing his heart to suddenly and completely comprehend and allow him to pass through the final barriers, it would have remained very difficult for him to reach this new level.

Within his sea of consciousness.

Ning's soul suddenly transformed into a sword, an incomparably dazzling sword. This was the sword-soul, which only a Sword Immortal who had truly reached the Grand Dao Domain level would possess. This was a fundamental change, an evolution of the soul.

Whoosh.

The sword suddenly transformed into Ji Ning's appearance...but the spirit-Ning faintly emanated with the light of a sword.

“What is the purpose of a life lived?”

“All I ask for is to be joyful.”

“Kill, kill, kill.”

“Exterminate all injustices!”

“Exterminate all those who deserve killing!”

“Only then will I be exultant.”

“As Loose Immortals, there is no path to immortality.”

“Thus...”

“Better to live passionately for a day, than to live a century while stifled.”

“My sword is the joyous sword, the sword of passion, the sword which exterminates all injustices. The name of this sword technique is the [Three-Foot Sword].”

While battling against Xue Hongyi, Ning suddenly began to laugh. Laugh loudly, and with joy. “Kill, kill, kill; exterminate all injustices, and exterminate all those who need killing! Better to live passionately for a day, than to live a century while stifled.” As Ning laughed loudly, the Darknorth swords in his hands suddenly became incomparably brilliant and incomparably awe-inspiring.

Swish!

An unfathomably terrifying sword-aura instantly filled the entire hall. A dazzling streak of sword-light lashed out, tearing through the flying needles as though they were made of rotting wood, then sliced across Xue Hongyi’s body.

“I, I, I...” Xue Hongyi’s eyes were completely round. He had never imagined that he would end up like this. Filled to the brim with terror, even his soul began to crack and shatter under the terrifying sword-aura filling the hall.

And then...his body fell into two parts on the ground.



The sixth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]...the Grand Dao Domain!

The [Three-Foot Sword], as the highest level sword art of the Black-White College, had six stances that were available to the public. The final three stances, however, were limited to direct, Epochal Transmission for Sword Immortals.

The first stance - Lustrous Sword-Heart

The second stance - Manifold Thistlethorns

The third stance - Sudden Sword-Light

The fourth stance - Sun in the Sky

The fifth stance - Moonlight Hiding the Sword

The sixth stance - Grand Dao Domain.

These sword stances weren't completely set in stone; for example, the first stance, Lustrous Sword-Heart, was different for each person, depending on how they comprehended it. The [Three-Foot Sword] primarily served as a guide. It guided Sword Immortals towards techniques that suited them best. Every single practitioner of the [Three-Foot Sword] was capable of executing the [Three-Foot Sword] in a way which suited them the most.

In dire straits, Ning's heart had completely merged into the Grand Dao, allowing him to reach the Grand Dao Domain level. The power of this sixth stance he had comprehended was truly incomparably frightening.

"Is this a Grand Dao Domain?" Youngflame Nong watched as a terrifying sword-aura washed over the entire hall, causing even his own soul to shudder. Youngflame Nong's face completely changed from its previous, calm and smug look. He stared at Ji Ning, this young man from a backwater clan, who seemed to have gone berserk and who had just killed Xue Hongyi with one blow. "How old is he? He actually...actually has already reached the Grand Dao Domain level? And in the Dao of the Sword, the most offensive of Daos?!"

Youngflame Nong suddenly felt jealousy in his heart; why couldn't he be

this talented? Why did this sort of talent had to fall onto a rustic youth like this one?

“Grand Dao Domain?”

“This Dao of the Sword...”

Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, and Ninelotus were in a state of shock. The sword-aura that filled the hall...all of them could feel the resoluteness, the sharpness, the indomitableness emanating from it.

The sword was a sharp weapon. The heart of a Sword Immortal...only one whose heart was truly as sharp, resolute, and indomitable as a sword would be capable of truly comprehending the exquisiteness of the Dao of the Sword.

When the sword emerged, there was no room for regret.

When the sword emerged, it could not be blocked.

This was what it meant to be a Sword Immortal!

“KILL!” Ning wielded his twin swords in his hands. His body suddenly increased dramatically as he transformed into a thirty meter tall giant as he simultaneously executed his divine ability, [Starseizing Hand] as well. In this moment, the sword-light in Ning’s hands had reached an awe-inspiringly powerful level. But Xiangliu Fang just let out a furious growl, smashing out with his palm, which swept forward like a dark stormcloud as the giant serpents that were his fingers ravenously bit down.

BOOOOOM!

An explosive sound rang out. The flesh on Xiangliu Fang’s serpent-hand split open, and fresh blood sprayed everywhere as divine power lashed everywhere.

Ning was sent flying nback as well, blood spewing out from his mouth. In this moment, Ning understood...that although his power had increased dramatically, compared with Xiangliu Fang, who possessed the power of a peak Loose Immortal, the difference in power was simply too great. The opponent was able to defeat him with just one hand.

“Ji Ning.”

“Senior apprentice-brother.”

Northson, Yu Wei, and Ninelotus all called out in alarm.

While being knocked backwards, Ning’s eyes became filled with madness. That black loop, which had been tucked into his bracer the entire time, suddenly appeared in his palm. This was the treasure which Daoist Threelives had personally forged; of Ning’s two important life-saving treasures, it was the only one capable of an active attack.

Ning had no other choices left to him.

“GO!” Ning waved his hand, sending the black loop flying out.

# Chapter 26: Killing Youngflame Nong

The black loop seemed quite ordinary, but as Xiangliu Fang struck out with his massive, dark, cloud-like hand, with those giant, serpentine fingers...the black loop actually passed straight through it. The giant Fiendgod's hand wasn't harmed at all; it was as though the black loop was composed of a different type of force, as though it was illusory. It passed straight through.

"What's this?" Xiangliu Fang was completely flabbergasted.

"Kill him." Youngflame Nong's eyes were filled with a murderous intent as well, but then...he too stared in amazement at the black loop which had appeared.

A seemingly ordinary black loop, but it caused both Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang to feel nervousness, because they had no idea what sort of a treasure it was.

One of them was an ancient Fiendgod with vast experience. The other was all-but-guaranteed to be the next Godplume Duke, who similarly had seen many things. The two of them had seen countless treasures...but they had never seen a treasure like this before. In fact, they couldn't even tell what it was.

"This black loop easily passed through Xiangliu Fang's massive, Fiendgod hand...and didn't injure it in the slightest?" Mu Northson was completely awestruck as well.

It was like an ordinary person being 'struck' by a ghost; the ghost would pass straight through the person. When Xiangliu Fang and the sphere collided, the sphere shot straight through him. But Xiangliu Fang, as a Fiendgod, had an incredibly powerful level of divine power; if it had been a ghost or something like a ghost, it would have been shattered.

"What queer thing is this?" NInelotus was amazed as well. She came from the Dongyan clan, but had never heard of such a treasure.

"Eh?" Adept Vastriver had long ago awakened fragments of his former

memories, but he felt puzzled as well.

Yu Wei originally had a look of puzzlement, but then she revealed a look of astonishment. “Can this be...how can it...”

.....

The black loop flew into the air directly above Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang, and as it did, it suddenly emanated a soft, hazy glow, causing it to appear dreamlike and illusory.

“Shatter,” Xiangliu Fang howled angrily. A long awl appeared in his hand, filled with a boundless, savage aura, and Xiangliu Fang stabbed the black loop viciously with his awl.

“Protect me.” Youngflame Nong also felt that this black loop was extremely bizarre. He had already taken out that leaf-like Dao-seal earlier, in order to protect against the black-armored golem’s sudden ambush if necessary. He now shattered it right away. Instantly, a hazy golden aura covered him with a tight defensive aura. “This would be able to withstand for a few moments against even a full-strength attack from a Loose Immortal.”

Whoosh.

Xiangliu Fang’s ferocious stab...missed. It was as though the black loop didn’t exist at all; or perhaps, it existed on a completely different plane.

The black loop continued to emanate that hazy light. Suddenly, an invisible, devouring ripple swept out.

“This is...”

Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang’s faces both changed dramatically. They could both sense that invisible devouring force...and it was aimed directly at their souls.

“AHH!! NO—!” Youngflame Nong’s face turned incomparably savage and terrified. He let out a hideous howl...and then, his soul left his body. Twisting and distorting, it was forcibly drawn into that black loop.

Youngflame Nong was a peak Wanxiang Adept, and ever since he was

young, he had access to an extremely high level Visualization Technique; his soul was comparable to a Primal Daoist's by now, and so naturally it could almost take physical form. Ning and everyone else personally witnessed his twisting, distorting soul howl in anguish as it was drawn into the black loop.

“What sort of treasure is this? How can it absorb my soul? How can... how can...how can this be my end? How could I have died to this Ji Ning? Is my soul about to be destroyed? Ji Ning, Ji Ning, spare me, spare me!” Youngflame Nong's soul let out a soundless screech, continuing to twist and distort as it was drawn deeper and deeper within.

“I, I...” Xiangliu Fang was struggling in a berserk manner. And yet...his powerful Fiendgod's soul was still being forcibly ripped out from his Fiendgod body. As a Primal-level Fiendgod who was capable of creating a clone of himself, it was clear that his soul had long ago completely merged with his Fiendgod body, fusing into one. And yet, it was still being forcibly ripped out right now.

It was an enormous soul, and it was letting out earth-shaking bellows that shook the entire hall...but it, too, was being drawn into the black loop.

And so, just like that...

Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang, despite their protective treasures or powerful divine bodies...had their souls forcibly devoured by this terrifying, bizarre treasure.

Crack. The black loop let out a clear sound, like a piece of ice breaking. Instantly, it shattered apart, dissipating and melting in midair, leaving nothing behind at all. Even Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang's souls had completely vanished.

Slump.

Youngflame Nong's body remained standing there for a moment, eyes completely blank, and then his body slumped gently to the ground. The mighty Xiangliu Fang remained standing for a moment as well, but then he too collapsed to the ground, no longer breathing. This ancient

Fiendgod, who had been born in the Fiendgod Era, then been enslaved by the Youngflame clan...finally died on this day.

“Youngflame Nong and Xiangliu Fang just...just...just died, like that?” Northson stared with huge eyes. He cleared his throat repeatedly, completely awestruck.

“Dead. This...this...” Adept Vastriver was completely awestruck as well.

Ninelotus and Yu Wei both looked at the two collapsed, lifeless figures as well; one master, the other a servant. They felt as though they were in a dream.

Xiangliu Fang had been so powerful! He was an ancient Fiendgod! As for Youngflame Nong, his background and status were both mighty as well; earlier, when dealing with the monstrous Dao-soldiers, he had taken out the likes of the ‘Lock’ scroll and the ‘Polaris Starshifter’ treasure. They had watched him do this and had realized how truly extraordinary the next Godplume Duke truly was, and how many protective items he had. But the end result? They had both died.

Ji Ning, who had been knocked flying backwards and had vomited out blood, revealed a look of astonishment as well. He had never imagined that the black loop would be this powerful.

When he had originally selected the black loop, the giant yellow bear had said to him, “Ji Ning, to tell the truth, I originally didn’t want to give you this treasure. However, after you grow more powerful, it will no longer be of much use to you, as by the time you become a Primal, you’ll be able to carry around this underwater estate with you. The Wanxiang Adept period...this is the period in an Immortal cultivator’s life when he is most susceptible to dying. This treasure was personally forged by my master; although he did so casually, it is more than enough to keep you alive. You can consider it a second life....but it can only protect you once.”

“A treasure personally forged by Daoist Threelives...even though he made it in a casual way, it was simplicity itself for it to devour the souls of a Primal Fiendgod and a Wanxiang-level noble of a major clan.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh in astonishment to himself.

He only knew that this black loop was meant for the sole purpose of drawing in and eradicating souls...but up till now, he had no idea how powerful it was.

.....

Ning was only amazed for a second. In the next instant, however, he understood that he had embarked on a path of no return.

Actually, ever since Youngflame Nong had determined that Ning was a descendant of the Yuchi clan and moved to kill him, Ning had already embarked on a path of no return. Either he would be killed by Youngflame Nong, or he would kill Youngflame Nong. These were his only two options! But by killing Youngflame Nong, someone who was virtually guaranteed to be the next Godplume Duke, and whose background was incredibly astonishing...

Youngflame Nong's status within his clan was similar to Ning's former status in the Ji clan of West Prefecture City; Ning had both the Lord Prefect and his own father supporting him. For it to be all but determined that Youngflame Nong would be the next Godplume Duke meant that he definitely had an incredibly powerful figure supporting him as well!

Youngflame Nong had died. If only for emotional reasons alone, that powerful figure would come to seek revenge! Aside from saving face for the Youngflame clan, revenge for Youngflame Nong would also be an important reason!

"Hahaha..." Ning actually began to laugh loudly. With a wave of his hand, he sent out a streak of earthfire, which burnt the corpse of Xue Hongyi to ash. He then collected the magic treasures which Xue Hongyi had left behind. Xue Hongyi had that Immortal-ranked magic treasure; naturally, since Ning was about to flee for his life, he would want to carry as many treasures with him as possible.

Whoosh.

With a single step, Ning moved to Youngflame Nong and the Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang's corpses. A streak of earthfire burned Youngflame Nong's corpses to gray ash, but the earthfire was completely unable to damage



Xiangliu Fang's Fiendgod body at all. This caused Ning to frown.

"Come in here." He simply stored the entire Fiendgod body into his storage-type magic treasure. Then, with a wave of his hand, Ning collected the key to the Immortal estate.

Ning quickly began to bind it. The key to the Immortal estate was merely a talisman; binding it was quite simple.

The nearby Northson, Yu Wei, Ninelotus, and Adept Vastriver just watched as Ning burned the corpses of Xue Hongyi and Youngflame Nong, then took away all their magic treasures. All of them were still in a state of shock.

"Senior apprentice-brother, you, you...you killed Youngflame Nong?" Northson's mouth flapped open a few times. He was still speechless.

More than ten or so Zifu Disciples were still alive. They all watched Ning intently, especially those two female Zifu-level maidservants who served Youngflame Nong.

Swish!

Ning's gaze flickered past them. Suddenly, the air was filled with sword-ki, which howled downwards, instantly killing all of the Deathsworn.

"If the Deathsworn remain alive, they would only reveal everything which happened here." Ning knew very well that these Deathsworn were completely loyal to Youngflame Nong. They had watched everything happen; once the Youngflame clan found these Deathsworn, everything would have been exposed.

"Ji Ning." Ninelotus had a look of panic on her face. Tears actually began to appear. "How could you have killed Youngflame Nong. This... next...this...the Youngflame clan is definitely going to pursue and kill you. There's no way...no way to stop the Youngflame clan. He was one of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty. He was extremely famous...for the sake of their reputation alone, the Youngflame clan would spare no expense in pursuing and killing you."

Ning looked towards Ninelotus. "I had no choice. I only had two options;

to let him kill me, or to kill him! Either he died or I died. What should I have done?"

Ninelotus was so frantic, she began to cry. Previously, she had been trying her best to prevent hatred from developing between Ning and Youngflame Nong, but in the end...the result was even worse than what she had feared. Youngflame Nong, the exalted heir-presumptive to the position of Godplume Duke of the Youngflame clan...had died.

"No need to panic," Ning said with cold calmness. "I killed Youngflame Nong, but I trust that none of you will voluntarily report me. There's no way the Youngflame clan would be able to ascertain, within such a short period of time, who the killer was. They will need to spend time to investigate. I'll immediately send you all out of this Immortal estate. By then, you can return to your own homes, to the Dongyan clan and to the Black-White College of Stillwater City. Nothing which happened here had anything to do with you. I was the killer; the Youngflame clan won't act against the rest of you. But by the time they've fully investigated this matter, I'll have already arranged an escape plan and executed it."

"Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you are wrong." Yu Wei was frantic and restless as well, and she said hurriedly, "According to legends, some extremely powerful figures, such as Celestial Immortals, are completely capable of causing a temporal inversion, resulting in scenes from the past being replayed in the present. From this, they can discover right away that you were the culprit."

Ning instantly felt his heart clench.

# Chapter 27: Traveling Alone

“Temporal inversion?” Ning instantly realized that the situation was far more dire than he had thought! He had previously believed that after having killed Youngflame Nong, he would have some time before the Youngflame clan discovered him, which would allow him to arrange for his clan, the Ji clan, to escape. But now, it seemed, time was far too tight.

“Everyone, we have no time. I’ll send you all out now. Go to a safe location. Because of me, all of you have been implicated.” In order to save time, Ning began to converse mentally with them.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning,” Yu Wei sent hurriedly, “You don’t need to worry about our safety; the Grand Xia Dynasty has its rules, and the Youngflame clan cannot simply do what it wishes. As long as we return to the Black-White College, we will be fine; the Grand Xia Dynasty’s laws state that violence is forbidden within its commandery cities. In addition, we weren’t the ones to kill Youngflame Nong, and so the Youngflame clan would have no excuse to act against us. Right now, you need to worry about yourself.”

“You have two main options right now.”

“The first is to flee. Flee to a place where the Youngflame clan cannot reach you and take revenge, such as other lesser or major worlds. Another option would be to flee straight to the main headquarters of the Raindragon Guard. The Raindragon Guard remains the most powerful military force within the Grand Xia Dynasty; no matter how daring the Youngflame clan is, they wouldn’t dare to act against you while you are with the Raindragon Guard.”

“The second option is to go up against them head-on. Go straight to the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty; that’s the capital city for the entirety of the Grand Xia Empire, and the most supreme clans and schools of the entire Grand Xia Empire reside there. You can first go to the local Raindragon Guard branch; that place will be absolutely safe. Afterwards, you can participate in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny.

Now that you have mastered a Grand Dao Domain, you will definitely be able to perform with brilliant splendor at the Conclave. Given your talent, there will be quite a few powers which will want to draw you into their fold. By then, you can join a power that is opposed to the Youngflame clan.”

“The Youngflame clan is powerful, but if you look at the Grand Xia Dynasty as a whole, you’ll still find a few organizations which are more powerful than them and which hold vast grudges against them. Some of the grudges can be described as ‘mortal enmity’, and there are more than a few; after all, in this vast world which the imperial clan of the Grand Xia Dynasty has unified, it is normal for the largest, most powerful clans, sects, and churches to have their disputes and grudges against each other. For example, the ‘Kindwater’ 1 clan is even more powerful than the Youngflame clan 2, and these two clans have felt mortal enmity towards each other ever since the Fiendgod Era. After countless generations of struggle, both sides have even lost Celestial Immortals. One leader after another has been assassinated by the other side as well. Given that you’ve killed Youngflame Nong, powers like the Kindwater clan would definitely be willing to pull you into their fold. By relying on powerful clans such as them, you can continue to fight against the Youngflame clan.”

“Two options; one to flee, the other to resist. These are the only two ideas I’m able to come up with in such a short period of time,” Yu Wei sent.

Ning had previously been planning on fleeing. He hadn’t expected that Yu Wei would be able to provide yet another clear path for him.

Right!

The Youngflame clan ranked in the top ten clans of the Grand Xia Dynasty...but that meant there were nine other clans on par with them! The more powerful an organization was, the more fights it would get into over resources; this was extremely common.

“As for your clan, the Ji clan,” Yu Wei sent hurriedly, “For now, you can have your clansmen lay low; you can also have some of the elites be sent

to Stillwater City or the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty. Murder and fighting is forbidden in commandery cities; if anyone dares to act in such a way, they will definitely suffer reprisals from the Grand Xia Dynasty.”

“Although the Youngflame clan might be able to arrange for some wanted criminals to go commit suicide attacks...how powerful could these wanted criminals possibly be? These wanted criminals are all completely lawless; the more powerful they are, the less willing they are to do anyone’s bidding, especially those Fiendgods and Loose Immortals. It will be very hard for the Youngflame clan to invite those truly terrifying figures to intervene.”

“The only option is for the Youngflame clan to send its own Loose Immortals out to annihilate your Ji clan. Even if they escape blame by claiming that the Loose Immortal did it of his own free will...that Loose Immortal would definitely die!”

Yu Wei continued, sending mentally, “No matter what, so long as a tribe can save its elites, in the future, it will flourish again. You are the genius which the Ji clan has finally produced after countless years; you need to protect yourself.”

“Thank you, senior apprentice-sister.” Ning had some plans of his own, but upon hearing Yu Wei’s suggestions, he instantly felt as though a bigger picture had been revealed to him, giving him some new ideas as well. And, Ning also had a feeling...as though Yu Wei seemed to have quite a clear understanding of the most powerful, supreme forces of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty.

“Ji Ning,” Ninelotus sent hurriedly, “Come with me. I’ll take you to see the Forefather and have him send you out from this major world of the Grand Xia Dynasty. As for the Ji clan, I’ll come up with a way to protect some of their elites. In the future, when you are more powerful and come back, we can have the Ji clan flourish again.”

“Senior apprentice-brother, are you preparing to flee? I’ll go with you. My master is close to the end of her life; she’s going to enter her final,

closed-door meditation. She's already taught me everything she can. I have nothing holding me back. Going with you and fleeing together is bound to be an exciting life," Northson sent.

"Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, protect yourself; only then will you have a chance to turn the tables in the future." Adept Vastriver looked towards Ning.

Ning laughed. Then, suddenly...Ning's gaze fell upon Ninelotus. He sent mentally, "Ninelotus."

"Yes?" Ninelotus looked at Ning.

"I killed Youngflame Nong. Regardless of whether I choose to flee to another world, or if I choose to join another supreme clan or alliance...I'll be unable to remain within Stillwater Commandery. I'll be a homeless wanderer...would you be willing to go with me?" Ning looked towards Ninelotus, eyes filled with hope.

"I, I..." Ninelotus hesitated.

She could imagine the path which Ning would walk down in the future. It would be a path of incomparable danger. Should she accompany him on that wandering path?

She felt an impulsive urge to agree. To wander to the edges of the world with Ning, to share life and death together.

But then she thought of her clan. She was the next leader of the Dongyan clan. She couldn't possibly just go wandering off with Ning to the ends of the earth endlessly. No one could know how long the wandering would last.

"Ninelotus." Ning could sense her hesitation. He couldn't help but feel a bit of pain in his heart.

He knew that this request of his was a bit excessive. Only...in this moment, after having embarked on this path, Ning truly wanted for someone to walk it with him. This arduous Immortal path...if someone could share it with him and share its burdens with him...Ning truly hoped that someone would be Ninelotus.

“I’m sorry.”

Ninelotus’ eyes filled with tears as she looked at Ning. “Ji Ning, I suddenly understand now. I simply can’t wander the world by your side; I can’t share life and death with you. The Forefather’s words were right. To be Dao-Companions...that means to be willing to die for someone. Dao-Companions...if Immortals or Buddhas block your path, for the sake of bringing your Dao-Companion back, you would be willing to murder Immortals or annihilate Buddhas. But I can’t do it! I truly can’t do it. I have my own path to follow and I...I don’t want to give up my own path for you.”

“I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.” Tears were streaming down Ninelotus’ face.

“No need to say anything further.”

Ning’s eyes were glimmering with unshed tears as well. “It’s my fault for being too greedy. I’m embarking on a path of certain danger, and I’ll definitely be fighting against the Youngflame clan for countless years to come. I went too far in what I asked for. I shouldn’t dare to drag you in and implicate you as well.”

“From now on...you are you.”

“I am me.”

“This Immortal path...it’s enough for me to walk it alone.”

Ning pointed into the distance. Whoosh! Instantly, a watery, rippling pattern appeared, followed by a tunnel. Outside the tunnel was the Skyrove Mountains of the Grand Xia Dynasty’s major world. Ning immediately said, “Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei, senior apprentice-brother Vastriver, junior apprentice-brother Northson, and Ninelotus... you can leave.”

“Senior apprentice-brother, I told you that I’m going to go adventuring with you. I have nothing holding me back. What the hell do I have to be afraid of?” Northson spoke with great urgency.

“This is an extremely dangerous path I am embarking on, junior apprentice-brother Northson...”

“Do you think I’m too weak for it?” Northson ground his teeth.

“Right. You are too weak. You can’t help me; instead, you’d slow me down.” Ning gritted his own teeth as well as he responded.

The nearby Yu Wei spoke out to urge Northson. “Junior apprentice-brother Northson, don’t be stubborn; this isn’t the time to show your loyalty. Your strength truly is a bit too low.”

Northson looked at Ning, his eyes turning slightly red. “Senior apprentice-brother, after my mother died, I no longer had any kinsmen left. After I joined the school, you became the closest person in my life. Long ago, I started to view you as I would an actual, biological brother. It is true that I am a bit weak, and I know that you said those word because you don’t want me to be pulled into this. I’m not going to say anything else for now, except...”

“When I go back, I’m going to train hard. And if you die, I’ll definitely take revenge for you.”

Ning’s eyes turned red. He hadn’t imagined...he truly hadn’t imagined that Northson, in his heart, viewed Ning as he would a real brother.

“Hahaha, don’t worry. I won’t die that easily.” Tears in his eyes, Ning laughed loudly, then said, “Stop dawdling. Hurry up and leave.”

Ninelotus felt all the more agony in her heart at this moment.

Even Northson had been willing to throw everything away, but her? She truly wanted to do the same, to throw everything away, to discard her clan, to roam the world by Ning’s side. But...she continued to hesitate. She just couldn’t throw it all away.

“I’m sorry.” Tears fell down Ninelotus’ face. “Stay alive. You have to stay alive.” And then, she turned her head and flew through the corridor to the Skyrove Mountains on the other side.

Northson, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver all understood. Dao-Companions, Dao-Companions...what were Dao-Companions? Only those who would never abandon each other, even at their most critical moments, could be considered Dao-Companions. Ninelotus’ departure,



and the words she had just spoken...they caused the three to understand that in the future, most likely Ji Ning and Ninelotus would truly embark on completely separate Immortal paths.

“Be careful,” Northson said.

“Stay alive.” Yu Wei looked at Ning.

“You have to stay alive,” Adept Vastriver instructed as well.

And then, the three flew through the corridor, arriving within the Skyrove Mountains. The corridor then shut.

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The Skyrove Mountains.

They had returned to the world of the Grand Xia Dynasty. Ninelotus, Yu Wei, Northson, and Adept Vastriver all turned their heads to stare at the corridor. Through it, they could vaguely make out that solitary, lonely figure within the main hall on the other side.

From today on...Ning was going to have to fight by himself.

Ninelotus stared through the tunnel. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't stop her tears from continuing to fall.

The choice she had made today was an incomparably agonizing choice for her.

She wasn't able to abandon her tribe. She had her own dreams. She simply couldn't make herself discard everything for Ning's sake.

Yu Wei, Northson, and Adept Vastriver didn't say anything. This was because they, too, understood how rare it was for there to be a pair of Dao-Companions who would truly share life and death together, who would never leave each other, and whose lives would become as one. In fact, many so-called Dao-Companions would actually end up hating each other and becoming enemies; it wasn't uncommon for them to end up fighting over treasures and killing each other.

To truly be together until death parted them...this was far too rare. Ninelotus had too many other things she cared about. She couldn't throw

them all away.

Whoosh. The corridor swung shut, and they could no longer see to the other side.

“Let’s go.” Northson gritted his teeth.

“Let’s go.”

“I’m going back to my clan.”

Ninelotus returned by herself to the Dongyan clan, while Northson, Adept Vastriver, and Yu Wei returned to the Black-White College.

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Within the palace.

“From today onwards, I shall traverse my Immortal path alone. It’s for the best, actually. By myself, I’ll be much more carefree,” Ning said with a laugh.

“Master, you still have us.” Little Qing raised her serpentine head and called out to him.

Ning looked towards the Azure Skysnake, then towards Uncle White, who had followed him silently this entire time. He felt a warm feeling in his heart. “Right. I still have you two. Little Qing, Uncle White, let’s go. Let’s go and meet the monsters of this Immortal estate.”

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1. The character for ‘Kind’, Zhuan, is a reference to mythological Emperor Zhuanxu, one of the legendary Five Emperors of prehistoric China.
2. The character for ‘Flame’, Yan, is a reference to mythological Yan Emperor, the Flame Emperor.

# Chapter 28: The Thousand Year Pact

Within the Immortal estate.

The clan commanded by Immortal Witchsui, along with the many Seawave Dao-soldiers commanded by Immortal Duohe, continued to wait on the outside of the fifth palace. Although they were enraged and despairing, they still hoped...hoped that a miracle might occur.

“Monster clans.” Suddenly, a voice rang out, and along with it, waves of divine will rolled out, instantly encompassing all of the monstrous Dao-soldiers.

“Eh?” All of the monsters looked over. Even Immortal Witchsui and Immortal Duohe were shocked.

A few hundred kilometers away, there was a fur-clad youth, with a little azure serpent coiled around his arm and a large, snowy white dog by his side. In the air around them hovered ancient, plain, unadorned wooden sticks. It was the Fuxi Staff Formation; space within a hundred kilometers of that human was completely locked, and there would be no way to teleport inside.

“You?” Immortal Witchsui and Immortal Duohe immediately recognized him. Amongst the group of humans, there was indeed a fur-clad human who had a giant snowy white dog.

“The key to the Immortal estate is now in my hands.” Ning’s voice rang out by the ears of every single monster. His divine sense had spread to a thousand kilometers; naturally, he was able to send his voice to each and every one of them.

“Open.”

Ning held the key to the Immortal estate in his hands. He sent his will forth, and next to him a corridor appeared; it was the corridor to the Skyrove Mountains in the outside world. Actually, just now, Ning had already used the key to leave and go to the Skyrove Mountains, then re-entered, having Little Qing lead him and Uncle White in a teleportation.

Little Qing was actually far more powerful now than she had been in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains; for near-distance blinks, she could bring others along with her. The main thing was that Ning had yet to bind the various branches; if he emerged directly from within the Witchriver Palace, he would have been surrounded by the monsters.

“The key to the Immortal estate.”

“He is holding the key to the Immortal estate in his hands.”

“That’s the outside world, the smell of the outside world.” Immortal Witchsui and Immortal Duohe swept forward with their divine senses, and were even able to extend them into the corridor leading to the outside world. “That’s another world!”

Immortal Witchsui, Immortal Duohe, and the many monsters all stared towards Ning with even more blazingly desirous gazes. Although they were suspicious as to why the other human was no longer holding the key, the truth remained that this man before them was holding it now. They couldn’t be bothered to over-analyze it; they knew that the appearance of this youth represented a desire by this youth to negotiate with them.

Immortal Witchsui and Immortal Duohe were actually considering whether or not they should try to seize the key to the Immortal estate. However, their earlier, repeated failures caused them to no longer dare to act rashly.

“Don’t try anything. I’ve already set up a formation around me, and the corridor is already open; I can leave at any time. In addition, even if you truly were to attack, you wouldn’t be able to kill me,” Ning said. He had that other protective magic treasure, and also the magic treasures which Youngflame Nong had left behind. His words were completely true.

Immortal Witchsui and Immortal Duohe, as well as the other monsters, all calmed down. They no longer dared to make any more gambles.

“What do you want?” Immortal Witchsui asked.

“I offended a powerful a tribe, the Youngflame clan, and the clan is

going to come act against me. They might even act against my tribe.” Ning’s divine sense was sending a message to every single monster. “My tribe is located in a commandery city of the Grand Xia Dynasty, the City of Ten Thousand Swords. I wish for you, the monsters of this Immortal estate world, to go to the City of Ten Thousand Swords and protect my tribe. Protect them for a thousand years; after that period of time, I’ll release you and give you your freedom. As for the key to the Immortal estate? I can just give it to you.”

The key to the Immortal estate wasn’t of much use to Ning. There was no way he could carry the Witchriver Immortal Estate with him; what was he supposed to do with it? In addition, he had the underwater estate, an even finer estate left behind by Daoist Threelives. As for the treasures within the Witchriver Immortal Estate? The Dao Repository and the Treasure Vault had already been looted clean.

“Protect them for a thousand years?” Immortal Witchsui and Immortal Duohe, along with the tens of thousands of monsters, were both amazed and delighted.

Although a thousand years was a fairly long period of time, monsters had extremely long lifespans to begin with. To simply protect a tribe for a thousand years...they would then be able to go to the wider, vast world. They would even receive the key to the Immortal estate. They didn’t even dare to imagine something like this previously. They had been preparing to be fleeced, and had even been willing to hand over part of their Dao-armors as their offer for peace.

But Ning had no desire for the Dao-armors; wearing the Dao-armors, these monsters would be ten times or even tens of times more powerful. That was what he wanted; them to be powerful!

“Your tribe is located in the ‘City of Ten Thousand Swords’ of the Grand Xia Dynasty? Based on what I know, the Grand Xia Dynasty is extremely strict in its prohibition against battles within commandery cities. If anyone dares to fight within one, they will suffer pursuit and apprehension by the Grand Xia Dynasty. This ‘Youngflame’ clan that wishes to act against your tribe, they shouldn’t dare to actually attack

your city, should they?” Immortal Duohe asked.

Although they had always been trapped within here, they had passed down records regarding the Grand Xia Dynasty’s world from generation to generation, and so they knew some of the most basic things.

“Correct, they won’t dare to launch an actual attack. However, if they were to send some wanted criminals or some Deathsworn to attack my tribe...” Ning sent to them, “These criminals and Deathsworn would most likely be at the Wanxiang level or the Primal Daoist level. Loose Immortals? The chances of there being one of them should be very, very low. Celestial Immortals? That’s even less likely.”

To enter a commandery city of the Grand Xia Dynasty and launch an attack was a challenge and affront to the entire Dynasty. Anyone who did so would be killed without question.

For the sake of Youngflame Nong, who was already dead...would they really be willing to sacrifice a Loose Immortal, just for the sake of giving vent to their rage and killing a backwater tribe? The chances were quite low. As for sacrificing a Celestial Immortal? That was virtually impossible.

It must be understood that every single Celestial Immortal was considered one of the true foundations for a clan. A single word from a Celestial Immortal could even cause the clan leader to be changed.

If Ning were to become a Celestial Immortal, he would become one of the figures capable of influencing the entire Grand Xia Dynasty; even the entire Youngflame clan would treat him with courtesy. If it had been a Celestial Immortal who had killed Youngflame Nong, most likely the Youngflame clan would just go negotiate with him, rather than pursue and attack him. Thus, there was no way the Youngflame clan would be so stupid as to send a Celestial Immortal into a commandery city and begin a slaughter.

“We know a little bit about the Grand Xia Empire’s world. It is already incredible for the supreme clans to have even just one or two Celestial Immortals; there is no way they would let them end up as wanted

criminals.” Immortal Duohe and Witchsui exchanged a glance, then made up their minds.

“We have decided to agree to your request. For a thousand years, we shall be stationed at that commandery city of the Grand Xia Empire, the ‘City of Ten Thousand Swords’, and protect your clan. Given our power, even if supreme Loose Immortals come, we should be able to easily defeat them. However, if a Celestial Immortal comes, there is nothing we can do.”

“If a Celestial Immortal attacks, I’ll just accept it,” Ning sent. “Monsters, all of you need to now swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens. I shall do the same.”

“Fine.”

“That’s how it should be done.”

The monsters were indeed afraid that Ning would later go back on his word; it was best if they all swore oaths to the Dao of the Heavens.

Soon, with Ning personally choosing the words to the oaths, both came to an agreement on what to say, then swore the oaths.

Tens of thousands of monsters simultaneously swore an oath to the Dao of the Heavens. Ripples of power from the Dao of the Heavens descended upon them, and through his divine sense, Ning could clearly see every single monster making the oath. These thirty thousand-plus monsters were the elites of this entire Immortal estate world; more than ninety nine percent of the Diremonster Immortal cultivators were present.

Oaths to the Dao of the Heavens were useless against mortals and useless against ordinary monsters, but upon monsters or humans embarking upon the Immortal path, it would have tremendous effect! These monstrous Dao-soldiers were all at the Zifu level at the very least. The thirty thousand-plus monsters, along with two Loose Immortals, all swore their oaths to the Dao of the Heavens, and Ning, in turn, was no longer worried about them going back on their word.

Naturally, he swore an oath as well.

“There is no time to waste,” Ning sent mentally. “That expert from the Youngflame clan might even be a Celestial Immortal, and he will soon reach the Witchriver Immortal Estate. Once he comes, he might annihilate all of you. We need to immediately leave.”

“What?!” Immortal Witchsui, Immortal Duohe, and the others were all shocked.

The two Immortals were quite decisive; in the face of an opportunity that would change the destinies of all the monsters in the Immortal estate world, they immediately ordered the necessary arrangements be made. “Daoist Zhenbao, Daoist Witchaxle, each of you go lead a thousand Dao-soldiers and gather all of our clansmen within the Immortal estate world, then lead them to the City of Ten Thousand Swords.”

“This is a map of the Stillwater Commandery of the Grand Xia Empire. There is a mark here for the City of Ten Thousand Swords.” Ning flew over as well. Given that they had all sworn oaths to the Dao of the Heavens, they were naturally now in the same boat.

“We’ll lead these soldiers to head there right away,” Immortal Witchsui and Immortal Duohe both said. “Everyone, get in.” The two Immortals each produced a giant sack.

Whooooooooosh.

Not a single one of the many monstrous Dao-soldiers resisted. All of them allowed themselves to be drawn into the sacks, leaving behind just Immortal Zhenbao, Immortal Witchaxle, and the two thousand Dao-soldiers under their command.

“Let’s go.”

Whoosh. A corridor appeared, leading to the Skyrove Mountains.

Ning, Immortal Witchsui, Immortal Duohe, and Daoist Witchaxle all flew out.

They appeared within the gorge in the Skyrove Mountains. Even the aura and the smell here was different compared to the Immortal estate world; this was an aura of a vast, endless world, the smell of an entire,



major world.

“It’s different.”

“It really is different.”

“This is the Grand Xia Dynasty’s world.” Immortal Witchsui, Immortal Duohe, and the others were all stunned and excited.

“This is the key to the Immortal estate.” Ning handed the key directly to Daoist Witchaxle. “I’m giving it to you now. Immediately lead the remaining monsters to quickly depart from the Immortal estate world; if you delay, the situation might change.”

“Right.” Daoist Witchaxle accepted the key, then immediately generated a corridor, returning to the Immortal estate and then shutting the corridor off.

“Let’s go,” Ning said. “The City of Ten Thousand Swords is six hundred thousand kilometers to the north.”

“Let’s go.”

Immortal Duohe, that powerful old fellow, personally executed a teleportation, bringing Immortal Witchsui, Ning, Little Qing, and Uncle White with him in a long-distance teleport.

.....

Whoosh.

Ning realized that the surrounding environment had changed. He took a careful look, then said, “We were slightly off; the City of Ten Thousand Swords is roughly twenty six thousand kilometers to our southeast.”

“Then I’ll just teleport us again.” The shorter the distance, the easier a teleportation was. Immortal Duohe easily teleported them a short distance.

In the middle of the air, surrounded by clouds, at a location just a few hundred kilometers outside the City of Ten Thousand Swords. A spatial ripple appeared, then from within it emerged Immortal Duohe, Immortal Witchsui, and a fur-clad youth, a little azure serpent, and a large, snowy

white hound.

“Here we are.” Ning stared towards the distance. His Fiendgod-like eyesight could easily see the distant commandery city, just a few hundred kilometers away. This caused Ning to let out a sigh of relief; previously, when he had been chatting with the monsters in the Immortal estate, he had done so through divine sense, so as to save as much time as possible. He had been worried about taking too much time and unforeseen things happening.

Ning pointed towards the distant commandery city. “That city is the City of Ten Thousand Swords, the city which the monster clans of the Immortal estate must protect for a thousand years.”

# Chapter 29: Patriarch Arcanum

Within the City of Ten Thousand Swords. Inside a large, secluded, palace.

“What? A tribe even more powerful than the Northmont clan of Stillwater?” Ji Ninefire, Ji Truekeep, and Granny Shadow were completely petrified.

“This is Immortal Duohe, while this is Immortal Witchsui; both are extremely powerful Loose Immortals.” After describing the dangerous situation, Ji Ning moved to introduce the two by his side.

“Loose Immortals?”

Ninfire and the others felt dazed. Legendary, exalted Loose Immortals were before them...and two of them at that.

“They will command thirty thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers to protect our City of Ten Thousand Swords,” Ning said. “They are all wearing Dao-armors, and so with these two Loose Immortals in command of thirty thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers...even if tens of Loose Immortals come, they should be able to withstand them. They will protect our city for a thousand years. Unless a Celestial Immortal or someone with a Celestial Immortal’s power attacks us, our city should be completely safe.”

Ninefire, Truekeep, and Granny Shadow were cultivators, after all; despite still being stunned, they quickly regained their equilibrium.

“You three can decide what arrangements need to be made for the tribe,” Ning said. “You know more about these things than me anyhow.”

“Don’t worry.” Truekeep nodded. “With such a powerful army of Dao-soldiers stationed here, and with this being a commandery city of the Grand Xia Empire that is under special protection from the Raindragon Guard as well...anyone who dares attack will be pursued throughout the entire Grand Xia Dynasty! No matter how powerful the Youngflame clan is, they wouldn’t possibly be willing to have one of their legendary Celestial Immortals become a wanted criminal.”

Celestial Immortals were figures of legends. It wasn't even known for certain whether or not the Northmont clan of Stillwater had a Celestial Immortal. As for the Black-White College, in its countless years of existence, it had produced countless Loose Immortals, but only a single Celestial Immortal.

"Little Qing, Uncle White, the two of you shall stay here for now. Here is a talisman." Ning handed a talisman to the human-shaped Uncle White. "If you notice that the talisman has shattered, then teleport directly towards Serpentwing Lake and reunite with me. If the talisman remains whole, then you are absolutely not permitted to come."

"Right." Little Qing and Uncle White both nodded. At a critical moment like this, they wouldn't let him down.

"Ning, son, be careful," Uncle White instructed.

Ning nodded and smiled.

"I'll leave now. After this departure, I probably won't be able to return for a very long period of time." Ning looked towards Ninefire, Truekeep, and Granny shadow. "It was I who brought this calamity upon the tribe. In the future, I'll make up for it."

"Don't say such things!" Ninefire scolded in a low voice. "Remember, you have to protect yourself. Only if you are alive shall our Ji clan have a chance to flourish." For a tribe to produce a genius like Ning was completely a matter of luck.

"I'm leaving now." Ning immediately used a Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal. Whoosh. He disappeared from within the hall.

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In the air above Brightheart Island of Serpentwing Lake. A ripple in the air could be seen, and then Ning emerged.

"Autumn Leaf." Upon landing, Ning immediately sent his voice out, calling towards Autumn Leaf. Soon, a light gray-robed Autumn Leaf emerged. She looked at Ning in surprise and delight. "Young master."

“You can no longer stay on Brightheart Island. Hurry up and have everyone on the island move away to the City of Ten Thousand Swords. As for you, you need to leave immediately,” Ning instructed.

Autumn Leaf was stunned. “What, what happened?” Brightheart Island had long ago become her home; she had poured her heart out in developing this place.

“Don’t ask. I don’t have time to explain in detail. When you arrive in the City of Ten Thousand Swords, you can ask Uncle White and the others, and they will let you know. Right now, you need to make the arrangements right away, then immediately leave. This is a Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal; you can use it to teleport up to ten thousand kilometers away. Teleport straight to the city.” Ning handed her a Dao-seal.

Autumn Leaf immediately understood how grave the situation was.

Actually, even if a Celestial Immortal of the Youngflame clan was to personally investigate, he would have to first go into the Witchriver Immortal Estate, find the ‘Witchriver Palace’ in which Youngflame Nong had been killed, then utilize a temporal inversion technique. Even if, through the usage of such a technique, he discovered that Ning was the killer, he would probably need a bit of time before finding out about Ning’s background.

This entire process would take time, and in truth, by the time that Celestial Immortal might have made his way to Swallow Mountain, much time would have passed. And even if he came, he wouldn’t recognize Autumn Leaf, nor know about the relationship between her and Ning; thus, there was absolutely no need at all for Autumn Leaf to use the Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal. Ning, however, was uneasy. In order to prevent any unknown variables from arising, he thus instructed Autumn Leaf to use the Dao-seal.

Swoosh.

After making the arrangements, Autumn Leaf, per Ning’s request, was forced to use this Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal.

“Whew.” Ning let out a sigh of relief. “Alright.” He pushed open the door to the private room he normally stayed in, entered, then shut the door. With but a thought, he caused the illusion of a giant grizzly head to appear within the room. The grizzly head swallowed Ning within its mouth, and Ning disappeared from Serpentwing Lake, entering the underwater estate in another world.

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The imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty. This was the administrative heart of this entire major world. There were many Loose Immortals and Primal Daoists here, as well as various supreme tribes, schools, and sects as well! In fact, even some of the most powerful forces from other major worlds would arrange for spies and intelligence agents to be placed here. This was truly a place where the fish swam with the dragons. Immortals were as common as the clouds, and unfathomable in their power!

The Youngflame clan’s estate in this place took up a thousand kilometers. It was incomparably luxurious.

Within a quiet study inside their estate.

A golden-robed man with a crown on his head was seated before a desk, reading various intelligence reports. He was the leader of the Youngflame clan, the current Godplume Duke!

“The Kindwater clan is becoming increasingly excessive in their actions!” The golden-robed man frowned and muttered to himself.

“Clan leader, clan leader.” Suddenly, a panicked voice rang out. Upon hearing this voice, the golden-robed man’s face sunk. He hated it when his subordinates lost their bearings and grew panicked. However, this particular subordinate was his personal attendant, and one who should have known the rules.

The door was pushed open, and a middle-aged man dressed in blue robes charged in, then knelt down and said in sobbing voice, “Clan leader, young master Youngflame Nong, he, he...”

“Youngflame Nong? What about him?” The golden-robed man frowned.

“He died!” The blue-robed middle-aged servant spoke out in a terrified, frantic voice.

“What?!” The golden-robed man rose to his feet, revealing a look of astonishment. “How did he die? How do you know he died? You can’t say such things unless you are absolutely certain.”

“His life-tablet in the ancestral hall has shattered,” the blue-robed servant called out.

The golden-robed man stood there in the study. After a few moments of silence, he said in a low voice, “Investigate. Send out my orders; within the time needed to boil a kettle of tea, Youngflame Nong’s whereabouts needs to be discovered.”

“Yes,” the blue-robed servant said hurriedly.

“Youngflame Nong actually died? He should have gone to the Witchriver Immortal Estate. How could he have died? Even if he wasn’t able to bind the Witchriver Immortal Estate, he had a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal on him...even within the Immortal estate, he would’ve been able to teleport out to the Grand Xia Dynasty’s world. And he had that Fiendgod with him, Xiangliu Fang.” The golden-robed man was pondering to himself.

Youngflame Nong was one of his juniors; they weren’t exactly on close terms with each other, and in fact, he didn’t really like Youngflame Nong. But Youngflame Nong had a Celestial Immortal supporting him!

Although on the surface, the most powerful figure in a clan was its titular clan leader, compared to the Celestial Immortals who were the Patriarchs of the clan, the clan leader was far inferior. These Celestial Immortal Patriarchs who had lived countless years were the true foundation of a clan. The birth of every Celestial Immortal would cause the entire clan to celebrate, and the fall of every Celestial Immortal would be hidden for as long as possible.

This was why no one was certain as to how many Celestial Immortals a

clan had. For example, the Northmont clan of Stillwater; did it have any surviving Celestial Immortals or not? This was a mystery.

How many Celestial Immortal Patriarchs did the Youngflame clan have? This, too, was a mystery.

Even the Godplume Duke himself only knew of three Celestial Immortal Patriarchs within the clan; as for Youngflame Nong, he only knew of one! But even the Godplume Duke wasn't certain as to exactly how many Celestial Immortals his clan had.

"Clan leader." The blue-robed servant returned, saying hurriedly with respect, "Three days ago, Young master Youngflame Nong used a teleportation array to go to Stillwater Commandery, then headed towards the Witchriver Immortal Estate. I'm not capable of locating the exact location of the estate."

"Right." The golden-robed man nodded. "I need to go on a visit. For now, you are not to inform any outsiders of Youngflame Nong's death."

"Yes."

Soon, nine golden Flood Dragons, pulling an Immortal carriage behind them, soared out from within the Youngflame clan's estate. They howled through the air, departing from the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty and entering the azure void of the skies.

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At the peak of a tall volcano which stretched through the clouds. The nine golden Flood Dragons, pulling the Immortal carriage, descended from the skies, then flew into the mouth of the volcano. The last time this volcano had erupted was hundreds of thousands of years ago.

They continued to fly down through the opening.

Bubbling streams of lava could be seen in the depths below. In the center of the lava flows, a towering, red-haired giant could be seen, reclining in the lava. This red-haired giant lay there as though lying within a personal bathtub. His head was supported by a 'pillow' of stone, and his feet pressed against another stone. His eyes were even larger than



the Immortal carriage.

“Senior Bafire.” The golden-robed man stood in front of the Immortal carriage and called out.

“Oh?” The red-haired giant opened his eyes and looked at the golden-robed man. After pondering a moment, he said slowly, “You are... Youngflame Fujun, the current clan leader and Godplume Duke?”

“I am.” The golden-robed man was still quite humble.

This was because he knew who the Fiendgod in front of him was. This Fiendgod was surnamed Bafire, and was an incomparably powerful warrior who had belonged to an extremely mighty Fiendgod tribe, back in the Fiendgod Era. He was a Void-level Fiendgod! However, although he was ‘only’ a Void-level Fiendgod, his true combat power was absolutely on the level of Celestial Immortals. In the past, it had been one of the most brilliant, outstanding Patriarchs of the Youngflame clan who had subdued and tamed him. Unfortunately, that Patriarch had already fallen over the passage of countless years.

“What is it?” The red-haired giant asked.

“Are the three Patriarchs still within this major world?” The golden-robed man asked.

The red-haired giant said slowly, “Patriarch Infatuation left this major world more than ten thousand years ago. Where he went, and when he shall return...is unknown. Patriarch Sunfish, just a few decades, went to meet with friends in the Deva realm; generally speaking, he will spend a century in the Deva realm when meeting with friends. Only Patriarch Arcanum remains here, in secluded meditation.”

“Youngflame Nong just died. This is a matter of grave import; I’d like to trouble you, senior Bafire, to make a report to Patriarch Arcanum,” the golden-robed man said hurriedly.

“Youngflame Nong? The next clan leader of your clan?” The red-haired giant laughed. “Your next clan leader actually died? What a joke. I’ll go help you make the report.”

The red-haired giant closed his eyes. Moments later, he opened them again. "Patriarch Arcanum will arrive right away."

The location of the place where Patriarch Arcanum was secluded was a mystery; only some of Patriarch Arcanum's closest confidantes knew. Not even the Godplume Duke knew.

Whooooosh.

In the air above the lava, spots of stellar light suddenly appeared. The brilliant spots of stellar light began to link together, seemingly forming a mysterious, arcane formation. Suddenly, a tall, skinny, narrow-eyed elder stepped out from within that swirl of countless stars. In this moment, it seemed as though the entire world was bowing towards him, as though he and he alone was the only master of the world.

"Patriarch Arcanum." The golden-robed man hurriedly bowed with respect.

# Credits

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